

Preventing human trafficking in the Western Balkans and supporting victims

The challenge

Despite the systems in place to combat human trafficking, the Western Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) is not sufficiently able to prevent trafficking in human beings or support (potential) victims. The Western Balkans are impacted in two ways: on the one hand, many of its residents migrate to the European Union (EU), while on the other, people from third countries transit the region with the aim of entering the EU. Refugees are also at risk of exploitation and trafficking. Their lack of financial resources often means they go in debt to smugglers, who in turn take advantage of this situation. Figures show that up to 15 per cent of displaced persons in the region fall victim to human trafficking, but only very few of them are identified as victims.

Our approach

The project advises public authorities and civil society in the Western Balkans on how to establish the underlying conditions to improve the situation for victims of human trafficking.

The goals are to make those affected more resistant to human trafficking and better identify and protect (potential) victims, for example by means of education and training as well as professional advisory services in the area of mental health. The cooperation and coordination between the public authorities and civil society, as well as between local and central authorities, will also be increased.

The project has two main target groups: refugees in the Western Balkan region and groups from the Western Balkans who are particularly at risk of being trafficked, for example, members of the Roma minority.

The project is focused on four fields of action:

- Making at-risk groups more resistant to the risks of human trafficking
- Better identifying (potential) victims of human trafficking
- Improving coordination and cooperation between different institutions
- Offering education and training as well as advisory services in the area of mental health and psychosocial support tailored to the requirements of the target groups

Project name	Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings in the Western Balkans (PaCT)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia
Lead executing agency	Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI)
Duration	October 2019 to September 2022

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Awareness raising exhibition of children's drawings on the topic of human trafficking



Regional Conference on Human Trafficking - "Together we can", Tirana 2019

The benefits

The project aims at achieving the following benefits:

- **Prevention:** strengthening the resilience of (potential) victims

By empowering public authorities and civil society institutions to carry out target-group-specific campaigns, awareness of specific risk situations is increased among service providers, the public and the target groups. In addition, by strengthening the capacity of asylum and reception facilities to provide psychosocial care and leisure activities, people on the move and the surrounding local population will be assisted in coping with the consequences of forced displacement.

- **Protection:** strengthening the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and improving their access to support services

By strengthening the capacity of relevant public authorities and NGOs to use target group and sector-specific indicators and standard operating procedures (SOPs), as well as establishing structures and mechanisms for mobile identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, at-risk groups will be better addressed. A strengthened identification process will also help overcome the "vicious circle" of under-representation of victimized refugees, young men and LGBTIQ people in victim statistics and the lack of resources to identify them.

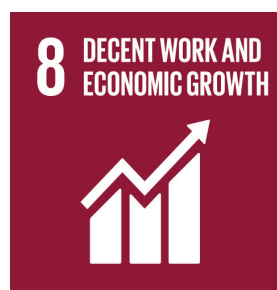
- **Partnerships:** strengthening the coordination and cooperation among relevant stakeholders in the referral mechanisms

Strengthening the monitoring and steering capacity of MARRI coordinators' offices to combat trafficking in human beings,

as well as strengthening the capacity of other relevant actors at central and local levels to implement the Referral Mechanism (NRM), will streamline the flow of information between stakeholders and improve participation at horizontal (between sectors) and vertical (between central and local) levels. This should contribute to a more efficient individual case management of identified victims of trafficking in human beings between responsible public authorities and civil society actors, thereby ensuring support more focused on the victims' specific needs.

- **Support Services:** increasing the availability and the quality of mental health and psychosocial support services in shelters

By strengthening the capacities of public institutions' and NGOs' staff working in shelters and day-care centers, victims of trafficking in human beings receive targeted psychosocial support according to their specific needs, especially considering traumatic experiences due to conflict, forced displacement, gender-based violence, and others. This should enable victims to stabilise mentally and emotionally within a protected space after experiencing trauma. Furthermore, it should contribute to strengthening individual coping mechanisms, prevention of trauma disorders and improving the prerequisites for successful medium or long-term social reintegration.



Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Prevention and combatting human trafficking
in the Western Balkans
Project main office in North Macedonia
Antonie Grubishikj Nr. 5, 1000 Skopje
Phone: +389 (0) 2 3103 570
Michael.Samec@giz.de
www.giz.de

As at

January 2020

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)