



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



International Labour Organization

EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project  
支持中欧人员往来和移民领域对话项目

## Seminar for facilitating network building among anti-trafficking criminal investigation experts

16-17 January 2018, SANYA

### SUMMARY REPORT



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized a two-day seminar on facilitating network building among anti-trafficking criminal investigation experts from 16-17 January in Sanya. The seminar was attended by 20 Chinese officials from MPS and police officers from 16 provincial public security departments. As a buildup to previous seminar held in Beijing in 2016 (title), the objective of the workshop was to cement EU-China networks with regard to counter-trafficking.

The seminar is under the framework of “*EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project*” (MMSP), funded by the Partnership Instrument (PI) of the European Union (EU). The activity provided an opportunity for Chinese and European counterparts to explore potential avenues for enhanced cooperation in cracking down trans-national cases, to impart practical knowledge on the ever-changing span of trafficking in human beings and to share effective tools in investigation to assist Chinese authorities in addressing human trafficking.

Officiated by Director CHEN Jianfeng, Ministry of Public Security Office to Combat Trafficking, and Mr Pär Liljert, Chief of Mission of IOM to China, both noted the importance of the joint efforts of governments, private sector, civil society and the international community in combatting human trafficking phenomena. Improved communication and information sharing between relevant governments is critical in the investigation of cases and the workshop provided an occasion to create new contacts and build new friendly ties that will fuel joint efforts on combatting human trafficking.

#### **Experts**

Chinese experts from central and provincial public security bureaus and European experts representing EUROPOL as well national police services of Denmark, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom shared their expertise and knowledge on how different countries investigate cases of human trafficking and the challenges faced in countertrafficking efforts.



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The key highlights of the sessions can be summarized under the following headings:

**China's counter-trafficking response**

**Director Chen** gave an outline of the prevalent features of trafficking challenges for China noting the three flows: trafficked Chinese women are sent mainly to European and African countries as well as Hong Kong and Macau; cases of migrants (foreign women) that are deceived into coming to China for the purposes of marriage with Chinese nationals (many of these victims originate from neighboring countries) and trafficking of women and children from certain Chinese provinces who are sold national wide in internal marriage migration. European experts were enlightened on this particular phenomenon of marriage migration and its link to trafficking as well the link between missing children and trafficking.

**Director Chen** pointed out the various measures that China has undertaken including inter-ministerial taskforce on Trafficking in Human Beings (THB); multi-layered mechanism of rapid response for missing children; national platform on missing children launched in May 2016 with more than 2400 children found and rescuing 45 victims from these missing children; nation-wide anti-trafficking DNA database; special measures to punish those that facilitate organized begging; supporting rescued children through the Ministry of Civil Affairs; public awareness working with China's central television and other campaigns on care for children, fight against trafficking as well as through an official social media account (9.6 million followers, awarded most popular government social media account). For female victims of trafficking into China, they are provided with legal, psychological, social and medical services. MPS works with IOM on enhancing capacity on identification and protection of victims.

China continues to strengthen the collaboration at the national and provincial level and to be an active partner in the cooperation at the ASEAN level. As both a source and destination country, China is keen on strengthening information intelligence/network to facilitate the cracking of cases especially with those countries that China has no formal agreement with regard to combatting trafficking. Director Chen highlighted that MPS has also worked with authorities in Australia, Congo, Togo and Spain where the working groups cooperate on rescuing Chinese women trafficked to these countries and punishing the criminals. The joint investigation with Spanish Police in 2016 saw 29 Chinese victims in Spain rescued and the criminal network dismantled. With regard to formal cooperation:

- Between Nov 2009 and 2016, China had signed bilateral agreements with Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia to crack down on cross border trafficking with ongoing discussions on the agreement with Thailand;
- In 2014, China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Anti-trafficking project on Mekong river region, a network formed to curb anti-trafficking implementing 4 taskforces and participating in the joint law enforcement mechanisms;
- China and UK are finalising negotiations for a bilateral agreement and it is hoped that the UK official visit in Feb 2018 could include the British Prime Minister and Chinese Premier witness the signature of the agreement.

**Director Chen** also highlighted the need for stepped up collaboration with counterparts in countries with agreements; establish formal cooperation with countries that China doesn't have an agreement with; enhance information sharing on investigations; strengthen border control and improvement law enforcement cooperation; enhance public awareness using social media, national TV and radio to create an atmosphere that facilitates in cracking down on trafficking.



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In his presentation, **Director XIE Zhiguang** from Guangdong Province gave an outlook of the situation of combatting trafficking in Guangdong. He pointed out the crackdown efforts to include: stepping-up cooperation with exit and entry department; investigating foreign labour trends; cooperation with all police services, ministry departments and civil society; provide assistance to victims and using multiple sources and technologies for inputs/messages. He noted that the challenges include the limited international collaboration (his province sees new entrants in THB into China from Colombia and Africa with Chinese women heading to France, Italy); nonworking channels of information exchange with international counterparts; inadequate feedback mechanism and limited cooperation between police services at regional level.

**European action on trafficking of human beings – EUROPOL**

**Mr Pedro Assares Rodrigues** gave a brief introduction of EUROPOL and its roles, the cooperation agreements EUROPOL has concluded and noting that its 225 liaison officers stem from European countries and are based at its HQ (The Hague), Interpol IGSI, Interpol IPSG and Washington DC. The office responsible for THB is the European Serious Organized Crime Centre. Since June 2017, EUROPOL has set up internally the Phoenix project as a tool to support live investigations with its priorities including sharing information, creating an environment for investigation and supporting EMPACT THB<sup>1</sup> (noting previous cooperation with Chinese and an ongoing Chinese delegation visit) and specific focus on Chinese THB; THB and the internet; labour exploitation.

EUROPOL provides analytic support: cross checks and strategic assessment, which includes information exchange, tailored analysis and analytical support on the spot and operational support chain.

He noted that sexual exploitation is the most prevalent form (70%) of exploitation reported to EUROPOL. The profile of victims and suspects shows Romania (45%), Bulgaria, Nigeria plus Hungary top the list and China (3%) is part of top 10. The victims and suspects usually share nationality, ethnic ties and sometimes kinship ties. In reference to the special focus on Chinese THB, embarked in 2017, it seems many cases relate to sexual exploitation. It involves multiple actors who hold two key meetings a year as well other meetings on how to take forward recommendations to resolve issues. EUROPOL and Chinese officials continue to engage on a regular basis, with the next meeting to be held in January.

Responding to questions, Mr Rodrigues remarked that currently EUROPOL member states and China can share information by leveraging individual bilateral relationships that China has with EU Member States and sharing information through these channels. He also added that challenges still do exist full effective cooperation with regard to criminal investigations in human trafficking cases in Europe. Nonetheless, the different judicial jurisdictions have different requirements which can impact on such as access to victims and cross border cooperation between law enforcement agencies..

<sup>1</sup> The EMPACT (European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats) THB project is the multilateral cooperation platform to address THB at the EU level. It is part of the intelligence-led policing approach to tackle organised crime, identify priorities and establish an international teamwork approach to bring down criminal groups that threaten the security of the European Union.



### **National perspectives: Switzerland**

**Mr José-François Morier** gave an overview of the trafficking in human beings/migrant smuggling unit of the Swiss Federal Police outlining its role, noting Switzerland as mainly a destination for trafficking, the cooperation with non-law enforcement agencies the role of border control in identification of victims of THB and aspects of witness protection. An outline of the key features/characteristics of THB and investigations revealed that THB is mainly for the purpose of sexual exploitation (mainly women with recent origin countries from Asia including China and Thailand). As such, there is a critical need for Swiss collaboration with Chinese authorities to step-up the efforts to dismantle the sophisticated criminal network and establishment of networks/contacts to exchange and follow up requests for information. In response to questions, he highlighted a recent case in Switzerland of a Chinese victim which allowed for a discussion to understand and explore the relevant means and channels to share information and intelligence.

### **National perspectives: Denmark**

Ms Kit Andersen gave an overview of the National Centre for Investigation (NCI) under the Danish National Police as the national information hub on organized crime including THB with police officers, analysts and other staff providing strategic and operational analysis in the national database. Given the sophistication of THB, NCI tackle it by engaging all enforcement agencies concerned (successful inter-agency cooperation); cooperation with Interpol, IOM and local NGOs; training to ensure interagency vigilance guidelines and providing victims the necessary protection.

She resonated that the best evidence is statements from the victims. As such, police and other actors such as IOM work together, based on a victim approach and investigate, prosecute and convict the criminals. Statistics show the numbers are on the increase (sexual exploitation topping the list followed by forced labour). For 2016, the number of victims stands at 121, an increase from 17 in 2007. In terms of protection for victims, those who volunteer to return to their home countries are supported by the Danish authorities through the assisted voluntary return and reintegration program run by IOM. While those victims wishing to stay in Denmark, they are provided with the necessary documentation to stay regular and the means for livelihood.

### **National perspectives: Germany**

Shedding light on details from investigated cases, **Mr Marcus Wein** provided a descriptive picture of the operations of Chinese prostitution in Germany: recruitment, pricing, marketing. He gave an overview of how the German Police fight against THB with regard to Chinese cases noting that there needs to a more effective mechanism between the Chinese and German authorities to further support the efforts in tackling the threat and realities of human trafficking.

He pointed out that challenges to investigations include limited access to Wechat messenger predominantly used for communication by Chinese; difficulty in seeking out appropriate interpretation for rarely spoken Chinese dialects and enclosed Chinese communities which conveniently shields suspects and sometimes influences victims' protection/perception.



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In his presentation, **Mr Wein** gave a brief outline of the protection measures that German authorities working together with civil society provide for victims of trafficking. He highlighted that these include accommodation, medical, counselling and legal support as well as noting that information is provided in Mandarin through flyers and a support hotline (Violence against Women) available for Chinese victims.

In his presentation on cultural factors in combatting Chinese crime, **Mr Yu Dayong** from Germany added that patience is critical and an understanding of cultural differences should be added value in fighting THB. He provided an in-depth look into Chinese context vis-à-vis sexual exploitation market: profiling, marketing techniques, dynamics of regular migrants switching to illegal activities leading to exploitation. Knowledge and tact facilitate the structure of investigations and how to effectively analyze information derived and the behaviour of victims and suspects. He added that exchanges help to facilitate investigations suggesting that police to police cooperation such as participating in counterpart's awareness campaigns and coordinated working level visits.

**National perspectives: National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – United Kingdom**

In his presentation on a groundbreaking THB case in the UK, **Mr Paul Orchard** provided an outline of the NRM process starting from the local authority reporting, the completion of the NRM form which triggers a police investigation which are then collated by UKHTC. It is then analysed by competent authority (e.g. home office) which leads to care and support for the victim of trafficking. Throughout the process, from identity, analysis, temporal care and support to decision being made, building trust with the victim is a critical element of the investigation. Based at the UK Embassy in Beijing, Mr Orchard welcomed participants to contact him or his office for any issues related to Chinese cases of THB.

**International Cooperation perspective: Spain**

In her role managing a team under the Central Brigade of Combatting Human Trafficking in the services of the Spanish Police, **Mrs Cristina Hermoso Belmonte** presented an overview of a case that demonstrated the critical and timely need for practical cooperation from various agencies across different countries, to curb the trans-national nature of THB.

***Participants' evaluation:***

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to complete an online evaluation questionnaire. Using their smartphones, 18 participants subscribed to the IOM MMSP WeChat account and filled the online questionnaire. In the evaluation report (see below), 94% of the participants strongly agreed that their knowledge was improved on specific topics covered while 15 participants found it useful and relevant to their work. Ninety-four percent of the participants strongly agreed that participation and exchange were encouraged and all participants felt the seminar will facilitate and enhance possible cooperation and exchanges between EU member states and China in network building among anti-trafficking criminal investigation experts.

***Annexes:***

Annex 1: Agenda & List of participants (Attached to this document)

Annex 2: Evaluation Questionnaire Report (See below)