



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



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



International Labour Organization

Measures to Prevent and Address Human Trafficking

Exchange Visit to Austria, Bulgaria and France

19-28 October 2015

Summary Report

IOM, in close coordination with the Chinese Ministries of Public Security and Foreign Affairs, facilitated a nine-day visit, from 19 to 28 October 2015, for high level Chinese officials to Austria, France and Bulgaria to study measures to prevent and address human trafficking. The visit was carried out within the framework of the “EU-China Dialogue on Migration and Mobility Support Project”, funded by the Partnership Instrument (PI) of the European Union (EU) and invited a delegation of six senior-level officials of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), led by Mr. CHEN Shiqu, the Deputy Director-General of the Criminal Investigation Department/Director of Office to Combat Human Trafficking (OCHT) of MPS. Other delegates included Deputy Director-General of Heilongjiang provincial Public Security Department, Director of Organized Crime Investigation Division, Deputy Director of Office to Combat Human Trafficking of the Criminal Investigation Department of MPS, as well as one official respectively from the Department of Consular Affairs and the Department of International Organizations and Conferences of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The objective of the exchange visit was to further strengthen EU-China dialogue on joint preventive measures to address irregular migration, in particular human trafficking and smuggling, through establishing partnership between EU Member States authorities and the Ministry of Public Security (OCHT) and enhance cooperation and information-sharing, primarily on detection and investigation of traffickers as well as identification and referral services. The aim was also to exchange information and statistics as well as to establish networks and face-to-face interaction to further promote future bilateral and EU cooperation and agreements.

The exchange visit provided a good occasion for the Chinese delegation to engage in discussions with European counterparts in these three countries and exchange experiences/information on measures to prevent and address human trafficking.

The Chinese delegation paid visit to the following European governmental institutions and NGOs:

Austria: Criminal Intelligence Service of Federal Ministry of the Interior; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Intervention Centre for Migrant Women Affected by Human Trafficking (LEFÖ-IBF); Men’s Health Center (MEN); and the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs.

Bulgaria: National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; Border Police of the Ministry of Interior; National Service for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Interior; State Agency for Child Protection of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Prosecutor on TIP; and the Ministry of Justice.

France: Lotus Bus/Doctors of the World; Central Office for the Suppression of Irregular Migration and the Employment of Irregular Migrants, Ministry of Interior; the Operational Co-ordination Unit for Combating the Smuggling and Exploitation of Migrants, Ministry of Interior; and Central Office for the Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings (OCRETH), Ministry of Interior.



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The Chinese delegation had detailed discussions and numerous exchanges with Austrian authorities about the current situation of trafficking in human beings in **Austria** and national approaches/mechanism on responding to this issue as well as international cooperation on investigation of cross-border trafficking cases. Two Austrian NGOs presented their work on direct assistance provision to migrant women victims of trafficking (VoTs) and counseling services to male VoT, including to 10 Chinese VoTs (whereof 1 returned to China, 7 remain in Austria and 2 are in France). Austrian police stated that there are over 10,000

Chinese living in Austria. Most of the Chinese VoTs were hired illegitimately to work in massage parlors, and the Austrian police see a need to investigate on the existence of a potential organized crime network. Deputy Director-General Chen introduced China's various policies and approaches to combating trafficking in human beings in the Chinese context and elaborated on specific campaigns to crack down this crime i.e. DNA system/quick finding mechanism for possible trafficked children. Deputy Director-General Chen shared that China was facing challenges of increasing cross-border trafficking cases, involving women from neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, trafficked to China for marriage purposes in rural poor areas. In addition, some trends show that more and more Chinese women are trafficked to Europe, Africa and Middle-East for sexual exploitation. In the discussions with the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs the importance was emphasized on the need to follow the money transfers of criminal networks operating in the field of human trafficking. For the cases of Chinese women in irregular status in Austria, Deputy Director-General Chen requested for more information so that the matter can be further investigated through detecting illegal recruitment agencies in China, and made the following recommendations to further enhance cooperation between Austria and China:

- Establishment of mutual communication and information-sharing mechanisms and channels for the investigation of individual Chinese citizens cases in Austria by either Interpol and the Interpol office branch in Heilongjiang and provided mail address of Office to Combat Human Trafficking;
- Strengthening joint investigation cooperation on Chinese trafficking cases and identification of potential Chinese victims of trafficking;
- Conducting regular meetings or sending expert delegations to conduct joint investigation of Chinese trafficking cases in Austria or sharing information of previous and ongoing trafficking cases; and
- Taking IOM as an important communication channel to facilitate information sharing between Austria and China.

During the meeting with officials of the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS) of the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), the Chinese delegation not only learnt about the function and work of UNODC in the area of anti-human trafficking and migrants' smuggling but also its technical assistance provided to various countries in dealing with these issues. Chinese delegation expressed willingness to continue cooperation with UNODC and proposed concrete methods of cooperation, including provision of relevant Chinese laws on human trafficking and closed



trafficking cases into UNODC’s database; strengthening cooperation and communications with UNODC Asia-Pacific Region Office; participation in training or capacity building activities targeting police, judges or procurators organized by UNODC; and attending UNODC expert group meeting on trafficking issues.



Through various high-level meetings and discussions with **Bulgarian organizations**, the Chinese delegation gained knowledge on current patterns and statistics on trafficking and counter-trafficking legal frameworks in Bulgaria. As one of the primary source countries of human trafficking in the EU, Bulgarian men, women, and children are mainly trafficked to Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, etc. Type of deception includes work or study opportunities abroad spread by “word of mouth” or ambiguous advertisements, marriage proposals, putting under pressure through the Internet, etc. In order to address these problems, the Bulgarian government has established a special coordination

mechanism with some Western European countries to strengthen information-sharing and identification of potential Bulgarian VoTs. The number of Chinese citizens in Bulgaria is rather small, estimated to be around 10,000 and mainly working in the textile industry. Although there are not many Chinese trafficking cases in Bulgaria, Deputy Director-General Chen mentioned that China had similarities with Bulgaria as both are source countries of human trafficking. Hence there is a need to strengthen mutual cooperation and explore how to improve the combat against human trafficking. Special attention was given to the fact that Bulgaria does joint investigations on trafficking with other EU MS, such as Germany, France and UK, but joint investigations with non-EU MS needs a separate agreement. The Chinese delegates showed interest in Bulgarian approach of setting up joint investigation group with other countries to deal with individual trafficking cases, facilitating the conviction process of traffickers.



In **France**, the Chinese delegation was invited to a wide range of exchanges and discussions with different French governmental institutions and an NGO. The officials of several subsidiary bodies of the Ministry of Interior presented an overview of the French legal, policy frameworks and other preventive measures to combat trafficking in human beings and forced labour. Current trends and statistics on trafficking in human beings in France were shared with the delegation including best practices on joint cooperation with Europol on investigating transnational illegal migrants including a specific database of trafficking cases in and outside EU. Both sides discussed the numbers, routes,



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settlement locations and trends of Chinese irregular migrants to France. The Chinese delegation learned about new routes and methods of trafficking and smuggling from China (especially from provinces in northeast of China: Heilongjiang province, Jilin province and Liaoning province) to Europe, such as getting the appropriate visa to France and then using fake Asian passports to UK, Netherlands, etc., or entering into France through transit countries in Africa and South America. Another trend was that some Chinese people came to France through diploma mills and overstayed afterwards. According to information of the French police, around 300 massage parlors in France engaged in sex services and most of them were managed or operated by Chinese people. Chinese organized crime groups organize prostitution of Chinese women in France and transferring them to other EU MS (i.e. Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain). Deputy Director-General Chen responded that Chinese police had similar information. He mentioned that Chinese police had difficulties in concluding investigations on these cases due to lack of testimony by the victims. He made following suggestions to crack down these criminal groups more effectively:

- Two-way channels of information-sharing should be set up through Chinese Embassy in France with OCRETH and similar arrangements to be made in China between police liaison officers at the French Embassy and OCHT. IOM should assist in bringing the two parties together for initial discussions;
- Collecting more information on the massage parlors and sharing them with Chinese side for further investigation in China;
- Conducting joint investigation of potential trafficking cases can save time and lead to identifying and cracking down on criminal networks behind the trafficking.

In order to help further investigate traffickers and criminal groups between China and France, both sides agreed to look into means to mutually share information on cases of Chinese victims of trafficking or smuggling.

Outcomes:

This exchange visit was very successful and delivered significant results to build up on EU-China bilateral cooperation on human trafficking. The active and open discussion between Chinese and European officials strongly improved understanding on the trends and patterns of human trafficking and forced labour in EU and China. It provided an opportunity for both EU and China to have an overview of their respective policies, approaches and international cooperation mechanisms to combat human trafficking. The activities contributed in strengthening EU-China information-sharing mechanisms and initial discussions on establishing channels for joint investigative operations on individual cases related to trafficking and criminal networks. Importantly, the authorities of three European countries and the Office to Combat Trafficking of MPS demonstrated strong willingness to further cooperate and set up direct working relationship as a result of the study tour.

The Chinese delegates were very satisfied with the results of study tour and gave very positive feedback on it. They highlighted that the ministries organizations/NGOs of the three countries were well-selected with extensive practical experience in dealing with human trafficking. Particularly, the Chinese delegates expressed their interest to draw upon some specific approaches including Austrian campaigns on combating human trafficking, NGOs' important role and function during protection process; Bulgarian joint investigation mechanism with Belgium, France and Finland and the role of its information liaison office; and French NGO on providing direct assistance and help to protect the



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potential victims of trafficking. They also emphasized that this visit contributed to the further consolidation of the EU-China cooperation in jointly combating human trafficking and smuggling through establishment of networks and joint investigation initiatives between EU and China. Overall the following *suggestions* and *recommendations* to strengthen EU-China cooperation on human trafficking were made:

- *Establish closer bilateral cooperation mechanisms and enhance information-sharing of both sides;*
- *Conduct joint criminal investigation operations to combat human trafficking;*
- *Carry out joint investigations on individual cases related to human trafficking; and*
- *Set-up regular communication and exchange mechanisms on trafficking issues and cases between Chinese and European police representatives at Embassies in Beijing and Paris.*