REACHing – Reinforcing Assistance to viCtims of Human trafficking

Context

Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) is one of the most serious human rights violations in Europe, affecting thousands of people every year, particularly vulnerable groups such as migrants, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors.

The new measures taken at European Union level, particularly under the new Directive 2024/ 1712 of 13 June 2024 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, are aimed in particular at ensuring that the authorities responsible for combating THB and those responsible for asylum coordinate their activities so that victims who also need international protection receive appropriate support and protection.

Despite the existence of European legal frameworks and European and national strategies aimed at preventing trafficking and protecting victims, many practical and operational challenges remain. In particular, frontline workers operating in reception centres and support services for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection often find it difficult to identify victims of human trafficking, provide them with appropriate support and ensure their effective referral to specialised services and organisations.

These shortcomings can be explained in part by the fragmentation of anti-trafficking measures in different countries, the diversity of national protection systems and insufficient cooperation between those involved in victim support, law enforcement agencies, social services, legal practitioners, etc. Furthermore, the complexity of trafficking networks and the phenomenon of control make early detection difficult, resulting in under-reporting of cases and insufficient protection for victims.

In this context, Forum réfugiés is coordinating and implementing an innovative and experimental European project called REACHing (REinforcing Assistance to viCtims of Human trafficking), which aims to provide an operational response to these urgent needs in the context of asylum and international protection, through the intervention of mobile teams in France, Italy and Greece. These mobile teams, composed in each of the three

countries of two staff specialising in issues related to human trafficking in the context of asylum (plus interpreters and/or cultural mediators), operate in several territories for 18 months on the basis of a common intervention framework adapted to the national context and needs.

Mobile teams' main tasks

- Support professionals working in structures and facilities that receive and assist asylum seekers and refugees by leading awareness-raising sessions on issues related to THB and providing them with support in identifying and assisting victims of THB who are asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection.
- Provide assistance to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection who are victims or potential victims of THB through group information and awareness-raising sessions, as well as tailored individual support.

Project's objectives

- Strengthen the capacities of professionals working in structures and facilities providing reception and support services to asylum seekers and refugees in relation to human trafficking (THB)
- Provide direct assistance to victims and potential victims of THB in the asylum and integration system
- Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, tools and good practices between European partners.
- Strengthen cooperation with institutional actors and other stakeholders at local, national and European level on issues related to international protection and THB.
- Share operational experiences and good practices between European partners and actors from a non-EU country, a transit country for migrants who are victims of THB on migration routes.

Target groups / beneficiaries

- Professionals working in programmes and facilities providing reception and support services to asylum seekers and refugees, and other organisations working with this population
- Asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection who are victims or potential victims of human trafficking.

Target objective

5,000 beneficiaries, professionals, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection who are victims or potential victims of human trafficking in the three partner countries.

Coordinator

Forum réfugiés

Partners

- Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)
- International Rescue Committee Italia (IRC Italia)
- CESIE ETS (European Centre of Studies and Initiatives, Italia)
- MIPROF (Mission interministérielle pour la protection des femmes contre les violences et la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains - Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women against Violence and the Fight against Human Trafficking)
- Université Clermont Auvergne

Funding

- European Commission (AMIF) and partners

Find out more

- Deliverables.

Based on needs assessments carried out in the three partner countries, as well as other consultations and relevant documents, a Common Framework has been drawn up to provide a common approach to the mobile teams' activities and to ensure effective coordination and monitoring of their interventions in their respective countries, as well as the sharing of good practices.