

Terms of Reference of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings

Adopted by the Committee of Senior Officials on 9 June 2020 in Copenhagen, Denmark

At the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik on 8 June 2006, the Heads of Government integrated the work of the Nordic Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings into the CBSS framework. Since 2006 the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings has been an open exchange forum and reference point on human trafficking issues in the Baltic Sea Region. Human trafficking is a cross-border crime of major global concern. It needs to be targeted through a multifaceted approach and regional cooperation. Prevention of trafficking in human beings for all forms of exploitation falls under the CBSS long term priority “Safe and Secure Region” and is incorporated in the Policy Area “Secure” of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

1. The overall objective

The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter - the Task Force) shall strengthen, build upon and improve current anti-trafficking policies, preventive and protective work through a coherent and multidisciplinary approach. There should be a possibility to continuously revise the exact objectives and methods of work and activities, in light of any developments concerning trafficking in human beings in the region. However, the guiding instruments and the overall objective should be permanent.

2. Structure of the Task Force work

2.1 Hands-on co-operation between experts

The Task Force builds on the concrete results achieved and lessons learned during the previous mandate period (2018 – 2020).

Furthermore, the work should give added value to the work that is already carried out by other organisations, e.g., UN, EC, CoE, OSCE, NCM and IOM. The Task Force should do its utmost to cooperate with these institutions to complement and intensify efforts of these organisations, as well as of other bodies of the CBSS.

The Task Force should closely cooperate with other units in the CBSS Secretariat, particularly with the Experts Group on Children at Risk (CAR) on issues pertaining to trafficking in human beings concerning persons under 18 and utilise the complimentary expertise of the CAR.

The Task Force can establish temporary subgroups on specific topics, projects or initiatives and invite other countries or organisations to participate in meetings and join the efforts on an ad-hoc basis or at a specific stage.

2.2 Composition of the Task Force

The Task Force should be composed of experts from the relevant ministries and specialised state agencies. There should be at least one contact person in each country, with whom the Task Force can communicate. The European Commission as a member of the CBSS can also appoint a member to the Task Force.

2.3 Meeting arrangement

There should be 2 to 3 meetings per CBSS presidency in order to approve the priorities, the workplan, the budget and to discuss relevant topics, regional cooperation and progress in achieving concrete results.

In order to reduce the impact on the environment online meetings may be organised if necessary and approved by the Task Force Presidency.

Task Force meetings take place in the presiding Member State. Upon decision of the Presidency one Task Force meeting per Presidency may be organised in Stockholm at the CBSS.

2.4 Decisions

Decisions are to be taken by consensus.

2.5 Role and responsibilities of the CBSS Task Force Presidency

The Task Force Presidency rotates among Member States on an annual basis following the CBSS Presidency (from July 1 to June 30). The Presidency upon agreement of the Task Force:

- 2.5.1 sets priorities for the work of the Task Force;
- 2.5.2 suggests and approves agendas of the Task Force meetings;
- 2.5.3 hosts Task Force meetings; provides venue and catering and facilitates other practical agreements of the meetings.

2.6 Role of the TF-THB Unit (“the Unit”) at the Permanent International Secretariat of the CBSS

The Unit provides secretarial and professional support to the Task Force:

- 2.6.1 drafts relevant documents and reports;
- 2.6.2 makes proposals and present initiatives to the Task Force in order to promote the objectives and implement the priorities decided by the Task Force;
- 2.6.3 develops annual workplans of the Task Force;
- 2.6.4 develops and implements transnational projects;
- 2.6.5 disseminates progress and results of the Task Force’s work;
- 2.6.6 presents the Task Force at relevant events and in international/regional networks;
- 2.6.7 ensures continuity and coordination of the Task Force’s work;
- 2.6.8 promotes enhanced dialogue, co-operation and alignment with other regional actors through a regular structured dialogue in the context of existing cooperation formats in the region.

2.7 Role of the members of the Task Force

The members of the Task Force are encouraged to:

2.7.1 consult with and inform the relevant Ministries in their home countries about the work and achievements of the Task Force;

2.7.2 present relevant country specific information during the Tour de Table session of each meeting;

2.7.3 inform the Unit about important issues and assist the Unit in identifying national experts and partners who should be included in projects or in other activities carried out by the Task Force;

2.7.4 promote work and expertise of the Task Force in other national and international arenas.

2.8 Time frame¹

The current mandate of the Task Force expires on 31 December 2020.

The time frame of the new mandate is from 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2025.

2.9 Funding and resources

Member States contribute financially to the work of the Task Force and the Secretariat functions. Funding for the functioning of the Secretariat shall be provided from the regular budget of the Secretariat. The Task Force continuously explores possibilities to ensure funding for projects in line with the Strategic Plan of the Task Force through

- external project funding;
- internal project funding (MS funding);
- funding for regional activities included in national action plans of the MS.

When engaging in fundraising activities, the TF-THB Unit of the CBSS Secretariat acts in accordance with the CBSS Principles and Guidelines for Fundraising.

¹ *Amended by the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials taken at their meeting 12 September 2007 in Riga, Latvia

** Amended by the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials taken at their meeting in Riga 27-28 March 2008 in Riga, Latvia

*** Amended by the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials taken at their meeting 3-4 March 2010 in Vilnius, Lithuania

**** Amended by the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials taken at their meeting 3-4 December 2013 in Stockholm, Sweden

***** Amended by the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials taken at their meeting 19 June in Reykjavik, Iceland

The presiding Member State hosting the meetings bears the costs of the meetings and other events initiated by the presiding Member State. The members of the Task Force are responsible for covering their travel and accommodation expenses.

2.10 Methods of work

- **Assess** and **respond** to new trends in trafficking in human beings and **act upon** these trends, based on information gathered by experts in the Member States, regional and international cooperation partners.
- **Facilitate** and **promote** co-ordination, exchange of knowledge, results and best practices between existing local, regional, national and international efforts, to help ensure that a multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral approach is applied in and between countries in the Baltic Sea region, and to stimulate and propose additional efforts.
- **Share** lessons learned and best practices with other regional organisations, supplementing their work and policies against trafficking in human beings.
- **Make use** of the experiences of existing networks, expertise and structures in the region; make the work more efficient and complementary by inviting representatives of other initiatives in the region (including CBSS expert groups international organisations and NGOs.)
- **Implement** hands-on projects and activities in order to prevent human trafficking, involve new actors and enhance the capacity and train relevant actors to better assist and identify victims of all forms of human trafficking in the Baltic Sea region.

3. Guiding international instruments

Where appropriate the following legal documents, recommendations and action plans should be taken into consideration at all times:

- the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and its protocols;
- the following recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member states of the Council of Europe: Recommendation No. R (91) 11 on sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution of, and trafficking in, children and young adults; Recommendation No. R (97) 13 concerning intimidation of witnesses and the rights of the defence; Recommendation No. R (2000) 11 on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation and Recommendation Rec (2001) 16 on the protection of children against sexual exploitation; Recommendation Rec (2002) 5 on the protection of women against violence;

- the following recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: Recommendation 1325 (1997) on traffic in women and forced prostitution in Council of Europe member states; Recommendation 1450 (2000) on violence against women in Europe; Recommendation 1545 (2002) on a campaign against trafficking in women; Recommendation 1610 (2003) on migration connected with trafficking in women and prostitution; Recommendation 1611 (2003) on trafficking in organs in Europe; Recommendation 1663 (2004) Domestic slavery: servitude, au pairs and mail-order brides;
- the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, (CETS nr 197, 2005);
- the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No.210, 2011);
- the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs (CETS No.216, 2015);
- the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, and the EU “Post 2016 Strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings”;
- European Union Council Directive of 29 April 2004 on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities; and the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime of October 25, 2012 (2012/29);
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, 15 September 1995; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
- the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol thereto to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children with a view to improving the protection which they afford and developing the standards established by them;
- the ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930;
- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (2015).

- Action plan of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (2017).

4. Activities of the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings

The Task Force works in line with the overall strategic objectives and goals for 2021 – 2025 and annual workplans. The TF-THB Strategic Plan shall be based on previous, ongoing and emerging work with a clear focus on the added value of the Task Force in counteracting all forms of trafficking in human beings by means of regional collaboration. The annual work plans shall contain concrete activities and progress indicators to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Developments in trends in trafficking in human beings are to be followed closely. The Task Force shall aim to initiate and implement transnational projects to respond to new trends and changes based on information gathered by experts in the Member States and regional and international cooperation partners.