



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Recommendations of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SR/CTHB) on the need to enhance anti-trafficking prevention amid mass migration flows

In recent weeks, an unprecedented number of persons seeking refuge from danger arrived in many OSCE participating States. These people, typically women, children and the elderly forced to leave their homes with little or no preparation, traveled a challenging and perilous path to reach the western borders of Ukraine and crossed in hope of help and safety. Responding to the situation, many governments—with the support of international organizations—have taken robust initial measures to welcome them and offer support and assistance to meet their immediate needs.

As earlier migration crises have demonstrated, criminal groups or individuals will take advantage of large flows of people to exploit the most vulnerable in transit and destination countries. While undertaking their journeys or upon reaching a destination, people seeking refuge can be exposed to trafficking for various purposes, including sexual and labour exploitation.

To prevent the current humanitarian crisis from turning into a human trafficking crisis, the SR/CTHB has developed the following practical recommendations to support OSCE participating States hosting Ukrainian people. As the humanitarian crisis is in an early phase, **prevention of human trafficking** through addressing vulnerabilities of people seeking refuge should be **a priority for all relevant actors**. The Office of the SR/CTHB stands ready to provide further support to OSCE participating States, including through tailored technical assistance for the development and implementation of policies as well as practical measures to combat human trafficking.

Immediate prevention measures and responses to pressing needs of persons seeking refuge

- Provide for housing and immediate needs of people seeking refuge, such as food, sanitation, clothing, access to mobile communication and internet, short-term financial assistance, in a **gender-sensitive, age-appropriate and trauma-informed manner**.
- To facilitate well-informed decisions and decrease reliance on third-party sources, **establish centralized information sources (e.g. a website) and hotlines** that can provide clear, comprehensive and clearly marked **official information** from national authorities. Advise people seeking refuge on procedures and steps to be followed, including relating to registration, residence, freedom of movement and available assistance, in languages understood by them. **Disseminate the information as broadly as possible**, both on and off line, taking into account the means for people seeking refuge to access the information.
- Provide **information on opportunities across communities and countries** to enable people seeking refuge to make well-informed decisions on their travel or stay as well as to

respond to the needs of the host communities. Regularly exchange and provide information to communities and individuals who temporarily host people seeking refuge on available referral, assistance and housing opportunities.

- Monitor information sharing platforms (both online and printed) for **misleading or deceptive information on housing and employment opportunities to prevent trafficking in human beings** and fraud.
- When providing for housing, **address potentially risky scenarios through registration of various housing options** (housing with relatives or close ones, reception centers, housing offered by strangers) and inform people seeking refuge accordingly.
- Ensure psychological support for adults and children, including by **engaging with qualified psychologists, educators and other service providers among people seeking refuge themselves** and leveraging their professional competency and language skills.
- Establish **contacts and regular exchange with existing Ukrainian communities** in countries of transit or destination to align assistance and support efforts and leverage their language and other skills.

Legislative and policy measures to prevent and mitigate vulnerabilities

- Ensure that national laws and regulations are promptly updated to provide **clear and comprehensive guidance** regarding access of people seeking refuge to:
 - Information in the languages they understand, including through unrestricted access to mobile communication and internet resources;
 - Temporary residence permit;
 - Medical insurance and health care;
 - Family preservation and reunification, including the possibility to move to relatives or other close ones. Community support is crucial to prevent victimization, including of children: under no circumstances should children be separated, even temporarily, from their parents or guardians. States should also consider options for asylum application within country of destination rather than only country of first entrance;
 - Access to labour market and gainful employment to facilitate transition off of financial assistance;
 - Age-appropriate care and education for children;
 - Access to local financial services, including providing pathways to open bank accounts in the absence of biometric form of identification and permanent address.
- When amending national regulations, analyze and incorporate possible scenarios regarding the **availability of identity documents** for adults and children seeking refuge (e.g. possible lack of biometrical and non-biometrical IDs, birth registration certificates, expiry of previously issued permits to stay).
- Distribute reception facilities within and across countries to avoid overburdening assistance and support systems, which can **create additional vulnerabilities**.
- Establish clear procedures for **rapid exchange of information on people seeking refuge registered in the transit and destination countries and their place of residence** in order to prevent people, especially children, from going missing and reduce their vulnerability to trafficking in human beings.

Integration assistance and support to lessen refugees' vulnerability to exploitation

- Facilitate the provision of **language courses** for adults and children seeking refuge in destination countries.
- Establish procedures to **validate professional competency of people seeking refuge** based on the diplomas and certificates issued by Ukrainian educational institutions.
- Provide **training opportunities** for people seeking refuge to prepare them for the local labour market, taking into consideration their education and work experience, to benefit from their skills and knowledge.
- Support **employment and integration of people seeking refuge in the formal labour market** by:
 - Providing clear information on employment contracts and required provisions in line with national legislation;
 - Providing step-by-step guidance on the procedures for signing an employment contract as well as benefits and other obligatory clauses translated into the languages understood by people seeking refuge;
 - Hiring Ukrainian-speaking people to assist employment centers and other relevant stakeholders in providing consultations to people seeking refuge;
 - Engaging with chambers of commerce to help identify businesses looking for employees and promote a verified list of employers for Ukrainians seeking employment.
- Arrange for **inclusive and accessible schooling and pre-school care** for children seeking refuge in destination countries to facilitate their access to education and allow their parents and guardians to engage in sustainable employment.

Enhance preparedness of CTHB mechanisms to monitor the risks of human trafficking and scale up the responses as needed

- Introduce immediate measures to **inform people seeking refuge of the risks of human trafficking**, including “too good to be true” transportation, housing and job offers along migration routes as well as in vicinity of the reception facilities and online.
- Enhance operations of **anti-trafficking hotlines**, including in languages understood by people seeking refuge, and broadly publicize the hotline number through means accessible to them, encouraging them to contact hotline in case of possible questions or suspicions.
- Mindful that the majority of Ukrainians seeking refuge are women, boys and girls, **monitor locations known for high risks of human trafficking**, including those related to provision of sexual services—including online—street begging and informal sectors of economy.
- Step up labour inspections to exercise state **control over high-risk business sectors**, including the travel and hospitality, cleaning, domestic care, construction, agriculture (harvesting), meat and other processing industries known to pose increased risks of trafficking in human beings for sexual and labour exploitation.
- National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators, Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, multi-agency Task Forces, law enforcement, labour inspectorates, health care practitioners, educators, social service providers, including CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders at

national and local levels should **remain attentive to dynamic patterns** of large flows of people and the constantly changing tactics employed by traffickers, and should rapidly **exchange information to adjust their responses accordingly.**

- Provide **necessary resources** to ensure a robust CTHB prevention and response to exploitation within large flows of people, including assistance and support to victims and presumed victims, as well as prosecution and prevention programming.
- To foster efficient **co-operation between OSCE participating States** and better protect people seeking refuge from falling prey to trafficking in human beings, urgently establish direct contacts between National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators, Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms of the transit and destination countries to exchange data and information on trafficking patterns observed and to co-ordinate on responses, including with international organizations as appropriate.