

Press Conference

“United against Child Trafficking”

9th October 2008 at the European Parliament

Report

Child victims of trafficking “are sold like commodities (...) for the sole purpose of sexual and labour exploitation, criminal activities, organ donations or illegal adoption”.

MEP Marusya Lyubcheva

Raising the fight against child trafficking as a priority on the EU political agenda

A press conference was given to honour and raise public awareness of the adoption of Written Declaration n.50 by the European Parliament on 22nd September 2008. This declaration united 425 MEPs, and represents the political will of the European Parliament to counter child trafficking, laying the foundations for future EU policy initiatives on this issue.

A call for cross border cooperation

The main promoter of the declaration, MEP Marusya Lyubcheva (PSE, Bulgaria), opened the press conference by stating that child trafficking is a global problem. Therefore, she called for active cooperation and exchange of experience between member states, EU authorities and NGOs, and supported the elaboration of a comprehensive European strategy and action plan to combat it. She deplored the “serious gaps and inconsistencies in the current national legislations and government approaches to this issue”. According to her, “we have failed to give children what they need from us: protection”.

Adequate support for victims of trafficking

Salvatore Parata, European Officer for TDHIF, observed that EU Policy on trafficking has been confused for many years with migration policies or sexual exploitation of women. Law enforcement authorities tend to consider children more as illegal migrants than as “victims of human rights violation entitled to legal protection”. Protection should not be dependent on citizenship and the collaboration of the child with judicial system, as is the case in many European states. Non-national child victims of trafficking deserve equal access to rights and protection measures to nationals. Accordingly, the EU should elaborate an effective and comprehensive child rights protection strategy and program. In this regard, this

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declaration constitutes an important step towards the development of a European policy to counter child trafficking.

Furthermore, child trafficking should be viewed as a broader phenomenon than sexual exploitation. Policy makers have to consider the causes of trafficking in the countries of origin in the development of programs to combat this issue.

Simon Chorley, Policy Officer for the NGO STOP the Traffic!, believes that the EU should address child trafficking both in its internal and external policy. He pointed out that trafficking routes do not run exclusively from poor to rich countries. For instance, half of the chocolate consumed in Europe comes from factories in Africa that exploit trafficked Africans. He concluded by reminding the audience that those children are above all victims and not criminals.

The declaration was initiated by five MEPs:

Marusya Lyubcheva (PSE, Bulgaria), the main protagonist

Zita Gurmai (PSE, Hungary),

Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK),

Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL, Sweden)

Anna Zaborska (EPP-ED, Slovakia)

And supported by 5 NGOs:

Terre des Hommes

CARE for Europe

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)

STOP the Traffic!

Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF)

Press review:

- [Rights: EU Parliament Acts Against Child Trafficking](#)

Source: Inter Press Service – Rome, Italy

Date: 9 Oct. 2008

- [EU Parliament Acts Against Child Trafficking](#)

Source: The Brunei Times

Date: 11 oct. 2008

- [MEPs Unite To Fight Child Trafficking](#)

Source: New Europe

Date: 29 Sept. 2008

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