



Trafficking in Human Beings (A/RES/73/146)

Portugal is implementing the IV Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2018 -2021 (IV Action Plan). The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) is the coordinating entity, assisted by a Technical Follow-up Committee. This IV Action Plan is structured upon Strategic Objectives: 1 - Reinforce knowledge, and inform and raise awareness on the issue of trafficking in human beings (THB); 2 - Ensuring victims' access to their rights, as well as consolidating, strengthening and qualifying the intervention; 3 - Strengthening the fight against organized crime networks, namely dismantling the business model and the chain supply of trafficking.

In August 2019, Portugal approved via a Resolution of the Council of Ministers the “National Plan for Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”. The Plan follows the original structure of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact and thus covers all the relevant dimensions of the migratory phenomenon. The Plan is conceived as an operational document, oriented towards practical and precise results. Its 2nd dimension pertains to “(...) the improvement of the processes of organization of migratory flows and integrated border management, namely (...) by combating trafficking in human beings (...). And it includes measures such as cooperation with countries of origin and transit in combating trafficking in human beings.” (Non official translation). The approval of this Plan recognizes other national public policies such as the Nationals Action Plans to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, which mainstream gender issues and are coordinated by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG).

Every year, during the EU Anti-Trafficking Day (18 October), Portugal launches a national campaign, which is broadcasted and disseminated on Radio; Regional Press; Mupis; Television; Cable Channels; Mupis at railways stations; News and broadcast advertising space.

2018 was marked by the launch of the National Campaign Against Trafficking in Human Beings "Podias ser Tu" (“it could have been you”). Also, during the month of October, the world premiere of the film "Cargo" was launched, focusing on the theme of human trafficking. This film was produced with public support and through a partnership with APF (Association for Family Planning - Specialized Multidisciplinary Teams to Support Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings), which provided essential technical support.

In 2019, on occasion of the European Day to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, the Foreigner and Border Service / Europol organized the International Conference “Trafficking of non-EU Children - Ensure the Best Interest of the Child: Learn to Act”, with the participation of international and national speakers. A campaign to combat trafficking in human beings was launched simultaneously, aiming to alert potential victims to the main channels where they can find help, protection and information, which was disseminated through social networks, televisions, radio and the written press. Every year, the Regional THB Networks launch similar initiatives.

Portugal has a referral mechanism in place that articulates law enforcement authorities with NGO that provide support to victims of trafficking. This mechanism was updated with recent guidelines that were implemented among all stakeholders. In the second half of 2018, this Flow Chart was redesigned for the exchange of information in case of detection of situations of THB defined in the scope of the Support and Protection Network for Victims of Trafficking (RAPVT): once police forces contact with a possible THB victim and have completed all due urgent

investigative proceedings, they make a brief security, social and psychological assessment of the victim. If the victim is in any form of risk, the NGO is contacted (available 24/7) and police officers are responsible for the transportation and security of the victim until transferred to the NGO. The NGO will then provide safe and secure housing for the victim, as well as social and psychological support. If, at any stage, the NGO needs further security measures or transportation it contacts the police investigative services.

Since 2018, Portugal has a service to provide safe transportation of THB victims when, after being flagged, they are referred to a Shelter and/or summoned to hearings or other legal appointments.

In 2018, the High Commission for Migration (ACM), a Public Institution, started to provide translation service for the Network for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking (RAPVT) and the Specialized Multidisciplinary Regional Teams (EME) in situations of assistance to foreign victims.

During the last semester of 2019, several actions were initiated that culminated in the opening of the first Autonomization Structure for victims of THB in Portugal. For this purpose, the NGO APF was provided with an apartment by one of the municipalities that is part of Northern Regional Support and Protection Network for victims of THB – Matosinhos City Council. In collaboration with the APF Team (which runs the shelter for women THB victims and minor children), the North Specialized Multidisciplinary Team (EME) created all the instruments necessary for the operationalization of this structure, namely: internal regulation, equipping and preparing the apartment, and analysis and selection of cases for integration into this new response. This apartment is used for victims that are in the process of social and labour reintegration.

In January 2020, the Thematic Statistical Bulletin entitled “The Gender Dimension in Trafficking in Human Beings”, was produced. This Bulletin is framed within the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings objective to produce, on an annual basis, thematic papers besides its quarterly and annual reports as well as the annual Bulletins with updated data on identified victims and on Justice Statistics (in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Justice Policies/Ministry of Justice). In this context, among others, the following have been produced:

- 2017: Thematic Bulletin on Child Trafficking (2008-2016);
- 2018: Thematic Bulletin on Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation (2008-2017);
- 2019: Thematic Bulletin on the Gender Dimension of THB (2008-2018).

Every year, several training actions are implemented involving the main strategic entities that are involved in the prevention, intervention and support to victims of THB.

A working group was created to develop a Protocol for the definition of procedures for the prevention, detection and protection of child victims of trafficking in human beings. Although Portugal as a Referral Mechanism since 2008, this Protocol aims to be a National Referral Mechanism targeting specifically children victims of trafficking. This Protocol/Referral Mechanism has three main objectives:

- 1) To establish procedures for the prevention, detection, identification, support and protection of children, or alleged (potential) children who are victims of human trafficking.

- 2) To Consolidate and strengthen mechanisms for coordination, cooperation and communication among the professionals involved throughout the various stages.
- 3) To guarantee the child's best interests throughout the various stages, avoiding situations of (re)victimization.

The Protocol / Referral Mechanism will include indicators for each of the stages and for higher vulnerability cases, as well as flowcharts (with stages, actors, procedures, and contacts). Additionally, the Protocol will include an assessment/evaluation model.

During this period, the National Commission for the Promotion of Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People, hereinafter referred to as National Commission, carried out awareness raising campaigns and provided training on the issue of trafficking for all forms of exploitation to professionals working in the 310 Local Commissions for the Protection of Children and Young People – hereinafter referred to as Local Commissions –, covering the entirety of the national territory, including the Autonomous Region of Madeira and the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

In January 2019, upon selection by the Council of Europe, the National Commission carried out a series of workshops aimed at children who had been, were going or would be going through age assessment procedures in Portugal, a situation that may affect trafficked children as well. The need to develop child-friendly information and development of child-friendly tools and procedures was clearly identified by the National Commission's facilitators, by the participant children and by the professionals that accompany them. The National Commission was financed by Council of Europe to produce a brochure on age assessment procedures designed for refugee and migrant children, as well as for children involved in situations in which those procedures are legally required, which includes children victims of trafficking in human beings.

In 2018, Portugal opened the first Shelter and Protection Center for child victims of trafficking, managed by the NGO Akto – Human Rights and Democracy - and which is publicly funded. The Shelter and Protection Center (CAP) for Children and Young People Victims of Human Trafficking, with a skilled team of professionals, ensures the temporary shelter of 6 children victims of human trafficking, in a secure place, providing a decent and welcoming environment that promotes the full development of their physical and mental health, and their social integration. In this center, children victims of trafficking are ensured their right to subsistence, access to adequate and urgent medical treatment, psychological assistance, protection, translation and interpretation services, access to education, as well as adequate legal services. All services and support are adapted to the needs of children and are provided by specialized professionals.

General Framework

Portugal has a national referral system in order to signal, identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking. This system includes procedures adapted to the different types of profiles related to the different forms of exploitation in the area of trafficking.

At an operational level and in order to detect victims of trafficking, during the reported period, Portugal has 5 Specialized Multidisciplinary Regional Teams (EME): North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo and Algarve region (covering the entire Portuguese continental territory), which are involved in the signaling, identification and assistance or assisted returns of THB victims (women, men or children). Each team has 24 hours telephone lines, available at any hour of the day or night. These 5 Specialized Multidisciplinary Teams run the 5 established "Regional

Networks to the Support and Protection of THB Victims”. In this period, more than 70 new entities have joined these regional networks of cooperation and information sharing, with the purpose of preventing, protecting and reintegrating victims of THB.

These Teams intervene at the local level, following a proximity perspective, in close collaboration with qualified professionals from governmental and non-governmental entities, namely Law Enforcement Agencies and the THB Shelters and Protecting Centers. It is through such collaborative work that the victim’s emotional stabilization and social reintegration is promoted via psychological, health, social and legal support.

There are 2 shelters specific for women victims of trafficking (and their children), and 2 shelters for men and their children. As aforementioned, Portugal implemented during this period a shelter specific for children victims of trafficking.

Measures adopted during COVID – 19

All support services for THB victims remained activated, through the EME and cooperation with police authorities, as well as shelters.

A set of recommendations and guidelines were circulated among the EME and shelters, based on the guidelines of the General Health Directorate (DGS).

During this period, all EMEs are operating normally, with the necessary sanitary precautions.

In relation to shelters, protective measures were taken in accordance to the instructions of the General Health Directorate (DGS).

Definition of a specific procedure between the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) and the National Institute of Medical Emergency (INEM) to respond to suspected cases of COVID-19 in the EME and shelters.

In the shelters, specific rooms were implemented for quarantine situations.

It is also important to mention that internal operating rules for the personnel at the shelters were implemented in accordance with the various guidelines that were provided by the General Health Directorate (DGS).