

APPG on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

GRETA

26 October 2015, 2pm, Macmillan Room Portcullis House

MINUTES

Present:

Rt Hon Baroness Butler-Sloss (Co-Chair) - EBS

Anthony Steen (Special Advisor) - ADS

Paul Blomfield MP - PB

Mark Pritchard MP - MP

Bob Stewart MP – BS

Claire Podbielski-Stewart - CPS

Baroness Sally Hamwee - SH

Alpha Kane (Parliamentary Assistant, Baroness Young of Hornsey) – AK

Imogen Atkinson (Parliamentary Assistant, David Burrowes PM) – IA

Siobhán Mullally (GRETA) - SM

Jan van Dijk (GRETA) - JvD

Petya Nestorova (GRETA) - PN

Gerald Dunn (GRETA) - GD

Tatian Jordan (Director, Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF)) - TJ

Euan Fraser (HTF)

Ekaterina Shubert (HTF)

Maarit Virenius-Varela (Modern Slavery Unit, Home Office)

The UK's approach to Modern Slavery

EBS provided an overview of the UK's approach to modern slavery following the Modern Slavery Act. It was emphasised that as the provisions of the Act have only recently come into effect, it is too early to draw any conclusions as to its effectiveness. EBS stated that the priority for the APPG is now to ensure effective implementation of the Act.

EBS highlighted certain issues which remain of concern to the APPG:

1. *Child victims of human trafficking* – problems include children going missing from care, a lack of reliable data, and inconsistent care provision throughout the country. The Child Advocate pilot scheme is ongoing and the APPG is awaiting the result.
2. *Overseas Domestic Workers* – the relevant provisions of the Modern Slavery Act have entered into force. The APPG is awaiting Independent Review of the Overseas Domestic Workers Visa.

Anti-Slavery Day Act (18th October)

EBS and TJ explained that Anti-Slavery Day has become increasingly known throughout the country. When it began it was only marked by a few NGOs. Now Local Authorities and police forces throughout the country mark the occasion. Over 50 events have been recorded this year. The Anti-Slavery Day in the UK coincides with the EU Anti-Trafficking Day.

Transparency in Supply Chains

EBS stated that the provisions within the Modern Slavery Act relating to transparency in supply chains have now taken effect. Certain practical difficulties were identified, including the application of the requirement in relation to agents within supply chains and the difficulty in identifying the source of cotton.

SH discussed the importance of developing an appropriate mechanism to collate and display such statements, for example via a central website. No decision has yet been reached by the Government as to how this is to be achieved.

The Swedish Model

Mark Pritchard MP raised the issue of the 'Swedish Model' of criminalising the purchase of sex and sought GRETA's opinion on the model.

JvD stated that GRETA does not have a policy in favour or against the model as it is not stipulated by the Council of Europe Convention.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

EBS stated that the UK is not greatly affected by the ongoing crisis at the moment. The UK Government has stated that 20,000 Syrian refugees will be relocated within the UK in the course of the next 5 years. These individuals will be identified from existing refugee camps.

ADS raised a concern that refugees were highly vulnerable and may fall prey to traffickers.

Child Victims of Trafficking

JvD expressed his concern at the inadequacies of the approach to child victims of trafficking, in particular in relation to children going missing from care. He stated his disappointment at the lack of action to close the protection gap, including opening of specialised safe house for trafficked children, believing that the child advocate scheme is not the final solution. This concern was raised by the previous GRETA country report on UK.

Members of the APPG agreed that the current approach is not satisfactory. ADS identified a lack of information regarding child victims as a significant problem.

Immigration Bill

PB expressed concern that the role of the GLA is at risk of being diluted by the creation of a new Director of Labour Market Enforcement under the Immigration Bill. He also expressed concern that

criminalising undocumented work will negate efforts to encourage people to come forward to expose gangmasters.

PN explained that Italy had previously adopted an approach of criminalising work by migrants without leave to remain. However, the law was reversed due to its negative impact.

Prosecution

SH stressed the importance of improving training for members of the judiciary and Crown Prosecution Service to ensure they understand the impact of trauma upon a victim.

JvD explained that GRETA usually recommends creating specialist prosecutors and judges in trafficking and slavery cases.

NRM Pilot

EBS explained that the year-long two pilot schemes have only recently commenced in West-Yorkshire and South-West. It is, therefore, too early to draw conclusions. TJ stated that one significant achievement is taking the immigration focus out of the NRM decision-making process by creating a specialised multi-disciplinary panel that will be taking decisions on all cases of potential victims of trafficking regardless of their nationality.

Effectiveness of the UK's efforts

ADS acknowledged that the UK's approach has improved significantly since GRETA's last evaluation. However, he questioned the effectiveness of the work in terms of the number of traffickers convicted and the number of victims rescued and the adequacy of any long-term victim support.

- The representatives from GRETA were given copies of the HTF report 'Life Beyond the Safe House' and HTF's Trafficking Survivor Care Standards
- ADS also agreed to send GRETA a copy of the APPG's report on the 'Inquiry into the collection, exchange and use of data about human trafficking and modern slavery'

MEETING CLOSED 3.15pm