

HDIM
Side Event for Trafficking
Organised by OSCE/ODIHR Anti-Trafficking Unit
Hotel Victoria Warsaw
Room 2
27.09.05

Is the return of trafficked victims always safe?

The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children requires that victims of trafficking should only be repatriated to their countries of origin ‘with due regard to the safety of that person...’ The OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking equally requires participating States to consider the safety of a trafficked person on repatriation and ensure the effective application of the principle of *non-refoulement*. But how well are States complying with these commitments?

Reports indicate that the identification of trafficked victims in destination countries remains inadequate. There are also concerns that trafficked victims will increasingly become the victims of expedited deportation processes. Measures to ensure the rapid removal of ‘illegal migrants’ can obscure the need to identify trafficked victims and may lead to their detention and summary deportation, sometimes within hours. Considerations for the safety of trafficked persons in these circumstances are rarely taken into account. On the other hand, where trafficked victims have been identified, practice differs as to how that person’s safety is assessed before their return. What exactly needs to be established and how this is best achieved is an issue of growing concern.

This side event aims to explore the experience of return from the country of destination to the country of origin and raise awareness of the relevant concerns. It will consider the processes in place to identify and assess risks to trafficked persons safety on return and present the experiences of returnees.

The side event will bring together practitioners from Moldova, Poland , Switzerland and the UK to discuss concerns with the return of trafficked persons and implications for countries of destination and origin; the conduct of return and the steps needed to ensure that return is always conducted with due regard for the safety of the trafficked person.

Refreshments will be available