



Combating human trafficking: round table to strengthen collaboration between public and private sector stakeholders

Bern, 25.01.2024 - Tracking financial flows is one of the tools in the fight against human trafficking. This is why the Money Laundering Reporting Office Switzerland (MROS) at fedpol, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has set up the Financial Intelligence against Human Trafficking (FIAHT) project. The project kicked off with a round-table discussion on 24 January. The aim is to raise awareness among financial intermediaries and strengthen collaboration between MROS, the financial sector and the relevant prosecuting authorities.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the private sector alone, which employs around 90% of forced labourers, generates USD 150 billion in illegal profits a year, including USD 47 billion in Europe and other industrialised countries. Human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour is often committed in the shadows by people involved in organised crime. They take advantage of their victims' vulnerability and insecurity to generate income in various sectors of the economy, including construction, catering and prostitution.

Under Swiss legislation, human trafficking and forced prostitution are considered predicate offences to money laundering. Financial intermediaries are therefore obliged to notify MROS if they suspect human trafficking or incitement to prostitution.

It is therefore essential to intensify collaboration with financial intermediaries and optimise cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in fighting these forms of crime. To this end, MROS and the OSCE organised a round table. It brought together the federal and cantonal authorities concerned with the issue, as well as MROS's foreign partner authorities. In

a second phase of the project, the financial sector will also be involved. Discussions highlighted the best tools for identifying potential victims or perpetrators, and for observing transactional and banking indicators linked to human trafficking in the financial sector.

The round table is part of the FIAHT project, set up by MROS in close collaboration with the OSCE. The aim of the project is to optimise cooperation between MROS, prosecuting authorities, financial intermediaries and Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), and other stakeholders in the field of financial analysis in the fight against human trafficking.

Furthermore, in its report 'Public-Private Partnership for Sharing Information to Fight Terrorist Financing and Money Laundering in Switzerland', MROS highlighted the importance of public-private partnership (PPP) in the fight against crime. This is one of the driving forces behind fedpol's crime-fighting strategy. Another decisive element in the fight against serious crime is to follow the money, i.e. to identify money flows acquired by criminal means in order to prevent criminals from generating profits with criminal money.

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