

Tánaiste Publishes New Anti-Human Trafficking Plan

17th October 2016

"It happens here. It happens in our cities and towns, across the country. And we can all play a role in tackling it. Don't close your eyes to human trafficking; know the signs."

- *Plan contains 65 actions to combat the crime of trafficking*
- *Commitment to comprehensive review of victim identification process*
- *Public awareness-raising and professional training key to more detection*

The Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Frances Fitzgerald TD, this morning launched Ireland's Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking.

The plan contains 65 actions designed to crackdown on individuals and gangs involved in the crime, to support victims, to raise public-awareness, and to enhance training for those likely to encounter victims.

Speaking at the Department of Justice and Equality, the Tánaiste said:

"Trafficking of human beings is a crime against humanity which has no place in a modern and civilised society. It undermines the human rights and dignity of the person and requires a response from all of society. This Second National Action Plan sets out a series of actions which, when pursued together with partners both State and non-State, will bring more perpetrators to justice and free victims from this form of modern slavery."

This Plan builds on the framework set up under the first National Action Plan in 2008 to respond to an increasingly organised and sophisticated international crime. Human trafficking is estimated, by international bodies, third only to trafficking of arms and drugs in terms of profitability for international crime gangs.

Between January 1 2009 and December 31 2015, a total of 417 victims of human trafficking were reported to or detected by An Garda Síochána. Many of these victims are referred directly by NGOs, and are immediately provided with a range of services designed to meet their needs. Both NGOs and the range of State service providers were consulted widely on the new plan.

The Tánaiste added:

“I know that the fight against this despicable crime remains an important priority for An Garda Síochána. I also want to acknowledge the contributions made by many NGO’s in addressing this issue, implementing and progressing the actions contained in the first National Action Plan as well as for their valuable contribution and input to the preparation of this new Plan. I look forward to the high level of co-operation between the governmental and non-governmental sector continuing”.

The Tánaiste concluded by emphasised the hidden nature of the crime and the need for vigilance in order to increase detection:

“Our experience to date in Ireland has shown that trafficking is not confined to the sex trade and is taking place in a range of legitimate industries, under the guise of genuine employment. This is unacceptable. Even one victim of human trafficking is one too many. I want to raise awareness of the issue among the general public and to encourage any one who suspects that trafficking may be taking place, to report their suspicions to the Gardaí”

ENDS

Note for editors

1. The goals of the Second National Action Plan can be summarised as the following:
 - Prevent trafficking in human beings
 - Identify, assist and protect and support victims of trafficking in human beings
 - Ensure an effective criminal justice response
 - Ensure that Ireland's response to human trafficking complies with the requirements of a human rights based approach and is gender sensitive.
 - Ensure effective co-ordination and co-operation between key actors, both nationally and internationally
 - Increase the level of knowledge of emerging trends in the trafficking of human beings
 - Continue to ensure an effective response to child trafficking.

2. Copies of the Executive Summary and the full 2nd National Action Plan are available on the Department's website www.justice.ie as well as the dedicated anti human trafficking website www.blueblindfold.ie