



INTERPOL



PROJECT THB BALKANS

Countering human trafficking in the Balkans

THE SITUATION

Trafficking in Human beings (THB) is a lucrative and fast-growing form of crime that involves the recruitment of victims by various means such as violence, deception, coercion or force for the sole purpose of exploitation.

Traffickers use increasingly sophisticated and tailored methods to target and exploit vulnerable people for a profit, with profound disregard for human life and dignity.

Migrant smuggling is closely connected to human trafficking. Migrant smuggling networks can take advantage of people seeking a better life by facilitating their illegal entry into a country and further exploiting them.

Several Western Balkan states are doubly impacted as they are both countries of origin and country of transit for migrants. Some of their residents seek to migrate, while people from other countries pass through the region with the aim of entering the European Union.

PROJECT AIMS

Project THB Balkans will strengthen the investigative capacity of law enforcement agencies in Balkan countries to counter human trafficking. This will be achieved by providing targeted training, investigative and operational support, and criminal analysis expertise.

The ultimate aim is for law enforcement agencies to identify cases of human trafficking and dismantle the organized criminal groups responsible.

Participants in the project will represent criminal and border police, national THB coordinators, specialized units, judges, prosecutors, INTERPOL National Central Bureaus (NCBs) and national police academies.



PROJECT THB BALKANS

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

After carrying out a needs assessment in each country, the following training programmes will be delivered online via the INTERPOL Virtual Academy:

- **INTERPOL Policing Capabilities:** This component equips participants with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective use of INTERPOL databases, applications, products and services.
- **Gender and Transnational Crime:** This component explores the impact of gender on law enforcement operations, such as gendered recruitment drivers, profiles of perpetrators and victims, and specific risks faced by the different genders. The aim is to not only detect crime but also to deal with victims in a gender-sensitive manner so as to prevent re-victimization.
- **Countering Human Trafficking SPOC (small private online course):** Among the topics covered are investigative techniques for countering human trafficking, modus operandi, and related international legal frameworks.
- **Train-the-Trainer** sessions, in which selected participants will be trained to deliver national training courses to local investigators in hotspots areas.

Other activities include:

- Meetings of the Human Trafficking Experts Group (HTEG);
- Support for ongoing investigations;
- National training courses;
- Outreach and participation in relevant external events, meetings, or conferences;
- A table-top exercise to prepare for an on-the-ground operation by employing INTERPOL policing capabilities;
- A regional operation to identify cases of human trafficking, safeguard victims and arrest perpetrators.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED

Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia are primary beneficiaries.

Timeframe: June 2021 to September 2023

Budget: EUR 1,140,000



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INTERPOL General Secretariat
200 Quai Charles de Gaulle
69006 Lyon
France
www.interpol.int