



«Combating Exploitation - Creating Perspective»

Trafficking in Human Beings and Greek Mass Media

Guide for Journalists



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This Guide constitutes one of the products of the EQUAL Community Initiative Project “ASPIDDA: Combating Exploitation – Creating Perspective”, a project addressing victims of trafficking in human beings. The present Guide was drafted not merely to inform but also to sensitize journalists and the Mass Media, on issues relating to the presentation and communication management of the phenomenon.

The drafting of the present Guide is the outcome of the cooperation of four partners of the ASPIDDA Partnership: the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) – Mission in Greece, the REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE (C.R.T.V.), the RESEARCH AND SUPPORT CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF MALTREATMENT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION (C.V.M.E.) and the HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENCE CENTRE (KEPAD). The contribution of Dr. Hercules Moskoff, Expert - Counselor of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has also been of particular importance. He was responsible for the scientific editing of the Guide and has significantly contributed to the development of its content.

Those who deal with trafficking in human beings, a complex and sensitive issue, are required to adopt a responsible approach. This particularly applies for Mass Media, as their power does not only involve disseminating information to a wide range of recipients, but also forming public awareness, stance and perception. The ASPIDDA Partnership, through this Guide, aims at motivating Greek journalists to assume the dimensions of their responsibility; to make them understand that they need to guarantee a valid, comprehensive and accurately oriented public awareness, in order to avoid the formation of false stereotypes towards victims of trafficking, as these stereotypes can be further harmful for their position which is already vulnerable.

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Trafficking in human beings is a global phenomenon that accumulated vast proportions during the 90s in Greece and became increasingly attractive for the Media. As human trafficking issues appear more and more in Mass Media, their responsibility for the manner they present and handle events, persons and aspects of the phenomenon grows.

The role of Mass Media and journalists is crucial in making clearer to the public that human trafficking is not limited to sex stories, with which the phenomenon is linked in a deceiving and simplified manner. Trafficking in human beings does not only refer to women's sexual exploitation and should be distinguished from prostitution. It is a contemporary problem with political, social and economic ramifications and derives from particular root causes. The victim of this phenomenon is not only the person that becomes a commercial good, but also the contemporary civilized world, whose values are subjected to question. It constitutes a contemporary form of slavery that, apart from the tragic consequences for individual victims, degenerates values, principles and ideals of every democratic society that wishes to be defined as developed, not only in economic but also social terms.

Although in Greece the phenomenon of human trafficking is mainly identified as trafficking for sexual exploitation, other forms of trafficking, such as labor trafficking or trafficking for the removal of organs should not be ignored. Trafficking in human beings is a form of organized crime that possesses faster and more adjustable mechanisms in the modern geopolitical arena. Among the factors that obstruct action against human trafficking are the transnational networking of criminal networks, the decentralized nature of the phenomenon, the constant shift of persons in charge, corruption and many others. Recruiting and border - crossing methods as well as the form of physical and mostly psychological violence exercised to victims change constantly.

For the above reasons, it is necessary for Mass Media and journalists to systematically observe and deeply comprehend the phenomenon of human trafficking. In that way, they will avoid deficient and problematic approaches and presentations that not only do not fulfill the need for information and public awareness, but also contribute in creating and reproducing false stereotypes and perceptions. Human exploitation cannot be effectively dealt with, unless trafficking in human beings is understood in its real dimensions, forms, root causes and consequences and the whole society is motivated. Mass Media can significantly contribute to this cause.

The Phenomenon of Trafficking in Human Beings

The "UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children" (Palermo, Italy, 2000) defines trafficking in human beings as *"the recruitment transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs"*.

Moving on from official legal definitions, trafficking in human beings is, in simple words, human exploitation, abolition of human nature, abuse of the soul and the body, violation of fundamental human rights, contemporary form of slavery, trade of human organs, organized crime and more other things... It is a constantly evolving and changing phenomenon.

The main forms of exploitation are: sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography, etc), labor exploitation, trade of human organs and trafficking for military purposes. Victims of trafficking may be women, men and minors. Poor and often socially excluded persons are trafficked and become victims of exploitation. It is calculated that every year, 600.000 to 800.000 persons become victims of trafficking¹.

Taking into account that the victims' rights to freedom and dignity are violated and that they are subject to cruel and inhumane treatment, trafficking in human beings is a form of torture, a serious violation of human rights, a contemporary form of slavery. Many victims, during their exploitation, are usually mistaken for illegal migrants and face the additional risk of deportation. On the other hand, human trafficking may itself result from human rights violations, as usually victims come from societies where human rights protection is limited, if it exists at all.

Among the root causes of human trafficking are: poverty, high unemployment rates, inadequate education systems, vulnerable political systems, corruption, as well as economic and social disparities in wide regions of the plan-

¹ US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2005.

et. Although these problems have been always in existence, trafficking in human beings rise is rather recent. Organized trafficking rings found the opportunity to develop and increase one of the most lucrative illegal activities. Human trafficking is calculated to provide organized trafficking groups an annual income that reaches to 9,5 billion dollars².

Trafficking in human beings is a complex phenomenon linked to a variety of issues, such as migration policy, organized crime, prostitution, forced labor, human rights, violence against women and children, pedophiles' networks, de facto gender inequality, international economic disparities, etc.

In this framework, the development of an effective anti-trafficking strategy, both in countries of origin and destination, proves to be difficult, as it requires the adoption of a comprehensive approach. Such an approach should address the prosecution of traffickers, the protection of the victims, as well as the prevention of the phenomenon.

Given the phenomenon of globalization, human trafficking has acquired international dimensions, as rarely is it limited inside one country's territory and its consequences have impact in the international community as a whole. Legal counter-trafficking tools have been developed both at international –especially under the auspices of the UN and other regional organizations³ - and EU level⁴.

Greece, being at the same time a country of transit and destination for victims of trafficking, is required to adjust its legislation according to the international standards, as well as to the relevant EU legislation. The revision of the legal framework to this direction started in 2002. Today, a rather effective legal framework has been adopted to combat trafficking and protect victims⁵. In addition, further actions are being developed, aiming at establishing a comprehensive coordination among the relevant actors (governmental, international and NGOs), as well as at enhancing regional cooperation with countries of origin of trafficking victims.

² US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2005.

³ The most important counter-trafficking legal initiative undertaken under the UN auspices is the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Palermo, Italy, 2000.

⁴ The Council of Europe, the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International Organization for Migration, as well as other international and regional organizations have undertaken important counter-trafficking initiatives.

⁵ Among the most important counter-trafficking actions that have been developed in the framework of the EU are: the establishment of Europol and Eurojust, the EC Programs STOP, DAPHNE, AGIS, the relevant European Union Resolutions, the 1998 Vienna Action Plan, the 1999 Tampere Conclusions, the 2002 Brussels Declaration, the 2002 Council Framework Decision to combat trafficking in human beings, the 2003 establishment of the EU Experts Group on Trafficking in Human Beings and the 2004 Directive for the issuance of residence permit to victims of trafficking.

Presentation of the phenomenon

in the Greek Media

This Chapter examines the presentation and the communication management of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings. Do Mass Media shape social reality, or on the contrary social reality determines the structure and operation of Mass Media? In practice there is a reciprocal relationship, through which, Mass Media, on the one hand, form the perceptions of social norms and, on the other hand, reproduce dominant structures and reflect collective deep-rooted stances and perceptions. In any case, it should be acknowledged that Mass Media operate as mediators of the contemporary social reality, since they come in between the subjects and their experiences and often take up their connection to basic social institutions.

Research conducted to examine Mass Media role vis-à-vis human rights protection and organized crime activity, has shown that sometimes, the media violate the legally effective rules of law and human rights protection. Recently, we have observed Mass Media substituting prosecution and judicial authorities and turning TV-windows into a "public court".

In the news, the presentation of trafficking victims is over-simplified, emphasizing the sexual and sex-market dimension of the case. As a result, viewers confuse trafficking victims with voluntary prostitutes. TV Media operate exclusively pursuing the increase of their popularity. To attract viewers, they pursue the manipulation of their moral code. In most trafficking cases, emphasis is put on sex-stories. In addition, Media administration often underestimates the "sparse" and "hard-to-understand" information on the nature of human trafficking crime, such as the income it generates, its international and local trends, the role of the customer, corruption, and its social impact in general. As a result, public opinion is disoriented and forms a false picture of the phenomenon.

What is also common is the use of public language that is based on stereotypes, prejudices and generalizations concerning the role of migrants in Greek society. The use of the term "foreigner", while presenting human trafficking cases, has a negative effect in providing protection and social solidarity to the victim. The victim is no longer considered as a co-citizen-victim of a criminal attack, but as a foreigner who reflects all negative prejudices of foreigners' potential threat to the social cohesion of Greek society. For example, during the public hearing of a trafficking case in a city of rural Greece, representatives of local society, led by local journalists, accused the victim as one of the "foreign prostitutes who came to take our husbands away".

To sum up, the role of Greek Mass Media in human trafficking cases does not live up to its ideal role in raising awareness, informing and educating the public. Furthermore, Media has not been able to contribute to eliminate the risk rhetoric, which dictates intolerance of trafficking victims, this vulnerable social group of foreigners.

The “happy” victim

TV Media reportages are filled with images of naked dancers or sensual movie scenes, leading to the confusion of human trafficking with prostitution. They adopt a cheap sensualist approach and present victims in general as if they are prostitutes. Instead of adopting a narrative/realistic approach and presenting the factual aspects of the case, they create a false and fractional image of the characters involved in trafficking cases. Such images lead to the conclusion that women- victims of trafficking are in fact prostitutes who exercise prostitution to earn their living. Often it is assumed that victims enjoy the sexual services they voluntarily provide.

In the reportages' texts, journalists' references and conversations focus on specific parts of the case, which are portrayed in a melodramatic manner. Moreover, comments made on the victims' behavior (mainly comments on their provocative outfit), result in justifying their current situation. This is also the case for rape cases, where emphasis is put on the provocative outfit or the emancipated behavior of the victim, while it is not stressed that these details do not constitute mitigating factors according to the penal law.

Taking into account that the majority of victims are women, it is important to describe and examine the role of Greek Media in protecting them, as well as in the wider process of preventing, combating and presenting the phenomenon of human trafficking. Mainly the TV presents a number of prejudices and stereotypes relating to the women's nature that are conducive to discrimination against women and inadequate restitution and protection of the victims. On the one hand, women's presentation in public debate is limited compared to that of men. On the other hand, when women's voice is heard, it is usually a part of a preset communication framework, where stereotypes preside, the objective description of human trafficking is obstructed and the equal treatment of victims is undermined. Women's stereotypes involve characteristics, such as, youth, conventional beauty and identification with house/maternal duties. In its relationship with men, the woman's stereotype is squeezed between the bi-pole “woman-Madonna / woman-prostitute”. This obstructs the sober assessment of the category “woman-victim of trafficking”. Taking also into account the victims' usual tendency to identify themselves with their “fate”, because they feel “this is what they deserve” (Stockholm syndrome), it is important to note that women's stereotype tends to be determined in relation to a man and not autonomously, independently from him. In general, women are presented to be passive, indecisive, dependent, looking for the protection from the father - lover - master.

The impact of the dissemination of such stereotypes undermines the social outcry against women's exploitation and is responsible for the low rates of public information and awareness. It also influences women themselves, who usually present low rates of sympathy and solidarity to victims. In case women themselves become victims, the adoption of stereotypes renders them vulnerable, surrendered to their trafficker, with limited will for freedom and cooperation with the authorities for the prosecution of their traffickers. To sum up, the stereotypes' impact to public opinion is reinforced through the socialization process, i.e. the Media dissemination of principal ideas and values, which define and are themselves defined by the social norms and the required behaviors.

Media Social Responsibility

The way in which events are presented by the Media enjoys in advance credibility by the public opinion. Consequently, Media have increased responsibility for the way they handle and present events, persons, as well as groups of the population. This sense of increased social responsibility is usually absent from Greek TV news.

The main characteristics of the manner human trafficking is presented by TV Media are sensationalism, impulse, stimulation, myth and moral. They basically aim at attracting the viewers' attention. In almost all reportages, the choice of music, texts and images exclusively emphasizes the central characters of the events. It is almost always attempted to provide events with a dramatic or tragic dimension. Usually, there is an attempt to pledge the viewers' emotions in order to motivate their sense of common law.

Mass Media have acquired a great impact in "creating consent" and in forming and manipulating consciousness, perceptions and practices. An important issue is whether Media are able to substitute the function of institutions. The most significant of these institutions is the judicial power. Mass media "issue convictions through the use of images". As a TV product, negative news has greater impact and reflects more severity. The appearance of one's face and the revelation of one's identity, constitute a conviction in the sense of exposure.

It is important to examine the manner in which the protagonists of the events are described in Mass Media. In particular, the designation of the protagonists' identity takes place with the revelation of several characteristics (age, nationality, religion, profession, social behavior) and, mainly, includes adjectives that replace names or nouns.

The above characteristics are presented without always being necessary when providing information to the public. In addition, journalists and their chief-editors systematically ignore the fact that public exposure of some facts may give events a different, wider than the real one and sometimes false, dimension. In some cases, publishing specific facts may even contain the risk of victims' exposure.

Journalists reproduce and identify themselves with the stereotypic perceptions and prejudices of the average viewer. As a result, they contribute to the maintenance of these prejudices. Sometimes Media tend to define specific behavior types as “dangerous” for the society, treat non-conventional or deviating behaviors negatively or discriminatorily and demonstrate devotion to the national or local consent.

Electronic Media news makes disproportionate and abusive use of police press releases. It repeats reference to the same personal case in such a way that news is turned to a dramatic movie series, coupled with powerful music background and commentary that motivate the viewers’ disgust and anger. It uses adjectives that reflect the cultural identity or personal trait to describe persons. As a result, population groups as a whole are indirectly identified with one individual person.

Media do not take advantage of the public’s interest for the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings in order to provide better information with comprehensive analysis that could present the problem in its real dimensions and suggest some recommendations. Instead, TV-reality often substitutes judicial investigation of a trafficking case, ignoring real events, human rights of the persons involved and rules of journalists’ ethical conduct.

The viewers do not have the opportunity to form a comprehensive image of the problem. Mass Media refer to trafficking cases only if a new, usually tragic, case comes up which could not be ignored. Under this approach, neither trafficking in human beings, nor the violence against victims, are presented as social problems. Relevant reportages do not provide deep analysis of the phenomenon. They are rather limited to the presentation of victims’ personal stories.

Sometimes the problem is linked with other phenomena. Journalists do not focus on the differences among trafficking in human beings, migrants’ smuggling and prostitution. Thus, the public is confused with regards to the real meaning of trafficking in human beings. The use of erroneous definitions creates stereotypes and prejudices, especially towards women-victims.

Two typical TV Media examples, relating to what has been said for Media social responsibility, follow below.

The arrest of a mother accused for prostituting her daughters

The police arrested Ms St. in a village near a town of Northern Greece, for prostituting her daughters. The arrest took place during an appointment made between the mother and the policeman. Attention should be paid to the fact that the nature of the event and the involvement of minors, required special attention in the presentation of the case. The majority of reportages, with the exception of one TV station, neither reveals the name of the mother, nor shows her face. Yet, they give so many details (the name of the village, general family situation, relatives' and other neighbors' statements) that can certainly lead to the specific protagonists of the event. As a result, the faces' coverage and the non-reference of the names have no effect.

HIV transmission to a young woman through blood transfusion

The way that this case was presented, recalls the first phase of panic spread in the societies two decades ago, when the virus was revealed. The patients' social stigma and their social exclusion were the first reactions. This time, the target has been foreign girls, victims of contemporary slavery, who are considered responsible for what happens to them. In a TV reportage women-victims of trafficking were characterized as "walking bombs", coming exclusively from abroad. In the reportage and the news coverage, too much emphasis was put on the link between prostitution and blood transfusions. One important inadequacy of the news coverage was that it did not refer to the fact that, in Greek society, the low level of information on sexual education issues and of condom use are responsible for the risk of HIV rise.

In general, electronic Media – which have a higher number of recipients – usually ignore the real dimensions of the phenomenon of human trafficking and try to attract viewers for achieving higher ratings, instead of providing the public with accurate information.

On the contrary, in the written press, the phenomenon is handled in a more ethical journalistic manner. The frequent reference to the nature of human trafficking in relative articles and news coverage, the use of more appropriate language, the rare use of photos and pictures that create false impressions or attempt to arouse the public sentiment, are among the positive elements of the written press.

However, even in the written press one can find wrong approaches, equivalent to those of electronic Media. One of the most important errors is that –even written press– puts emphasis on the sexual and generally “spicy” aspects of the personal stories of the victims. This constitutes a common practice of journalists dealing with human trafficking issues. Giving details of the personal life of the victims is not always necessarily negative; especially in cases where sex stories are not accentuated and they do not reveal the identity of the victim or other personal traits that may violate her/his dignity or pose a risk to her/his life. Sometimes, the practice of presenting human trafficking through the real stories of the victims can significantly contribute in raising public awareness that is one of the strategic goals of those who are involved in the fight against trafficking in human beings. This is so because real stories contain a lot of the typical characteristics of human trafficking and through them, it becomes clear that victims are persons subject to trade, physical and psychological violence and human rights violations.

Nevertheless, the exhaustion of articles and news coverage in descriptions of sexual content leads to the underestimation of the real dimensions of the problem, without that being necessarily the purpose of the journalists. At the same time, the public gets confused regarding the reality of trafficking in human beings. Awareness can be more effectively raised with the presentation of additional information on human trafficking.

The dissemination of information through written press in many cases presents some weaknesses relating to the definition of trafficking in human beings. Occasionally, human trafficking is presented in such a manner that it is identified with prostitution and migrants’ smuggling. As a result, the readers form false impressions.

A typical example constitutes the title of a newspaper article on trafficking in alien women for sexual exploitation:

***“Income from prostitution rises up to 600.000.000 euro”
“Organized crime and illegal migration”... the same article continues.***

Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation constitutes only one dimension of human trafficking. Many journalists apparently ignore this fact.

“Criminal networks, human trafficking and begging” is the title of an article from which some parts are cited below.

“Economic exploitation of migrants is divided into sub-categories. The most recent one in Greece, which was under criminal investigation in 2004, refers to the transportation of groups of aliens from the most degraded and poor regions of the Balkans and Eastern Europe to Greece and their employment in manual jobs, mainly in agriculture, such as products’ crop. Foreigners work for 15-16 hours per day. They get only a small portion of their payment, while the largest part of their earnings goes to the members of the criminal networks.”

A second form of economic exploitation is the organized exploitation of, mostly, minors and persons with disabilities, for begging. The criminal networks recruit their victims in the countries of origin and they force them to beg or sell small things, mostly in tourist areas...

...Baby trade is another growing form of trafficking in persons. It consists of pregnant women transferred from Bulgaria to Greece to give birth in Greek hospitals. The newly born babies are sold to couples that cannot have children.

The most popular form of human exploitation is trafficking for sexual exploitation, mainly affecting women. Victims of trafficking live in slavery-like conditions, locked in apartments and deprived of their passports. These women are forced to prostitution, often without getting any money. They are victims of brutal abuse, physical and psychological, in order not to resist and to remain silent."

In this specific article, a brief but comprehensive presentation of the phenomenon of human trafficking is attempted in an accurate manner. Reference is made to the different forms of exploitation, without providing personal examples or using analytical tools to sentimentally motivate the readers. At the same time, the article stresses the fact that trafficking in persons is not only about women victims but also about men or children.

In cases that the phenomenon is approached using methods such as those in the above article, it becomes easier for the public, not only to understand the basic elements of human trafficking, but also to be aware that trafficking in women for sexual exploitation is only one of the various forms of the phenomenon. Such approaches contribute to the more effective dissemination of information on the issue. This constitutes a basic condition for fruitfully achieving awareness and motivation of the whole society in order to reduce the phenomenon.

However, a fundamental mistake made in the process of disseminating information to the public concerns the definition of trafficking in human beings itself. It is sometimes solely identified as women's exploitation, while it should also refer to other forms of exploitation, such as to economic exploitation, begging or baby trade. The above article also commits this mistake. However, as far as the content of the information is concerned, taking into account that all different forms of exploitation, and not only sexual exploitation of women, are included, it constitutes an example of good-practice.

One more issue that needs to be addressed is the inclusion, in articles and reportages, of specific data for trafficking in persons.

“Shocking data

According to the facts:

- *Almost all foreign women transferred to our country for prostitution, speak no Greek and are unaware of the wider social reality in which they live.*
- *Even after living in Greece for six months -and sometimes after years- most of them are not able to take care of everyday tasks. Nor are they able to know and convert money for products or services!*
- *The majority of these foreign women cannot develop an objective sense of the social environment in which they live.*

After four months, and sometimes after years:

- *12% of these women did not know where they were in the town.*
- *50% did not know the geographic area of the town in which their neighborhood belongs.*
- *Almost 5% did not even know in which town they were.*
- *3% did not know in which country they had been transferred to.”*

In the above abstract, through a very descriptive and sentimental language, some data on foreign women victims of sexual exploitation is presented. Without aiming at questioning this data, it is necessary to stress that its validity would be more secure if the source, or method and tools used for its collection were cited.

The above comment refers to one more issue. This is the close cooperation of organizations involved in counter trafficking activities with journalists, who, from time to time, chose to conduct research and present relevant real data. Such cooperation would certainly guarantee a more comprehensive and accurate information of the general public. The qualitative and quantitative surveys conducted by governmental and non-governmental organizations, together with their personnel's expertise and experience in theoretical and practical level, could constitute a precious tank of official and checked data for journalists.

This mutual communication channel would facilitate Mass Media in their efforts to inform the public for relevant issues in a credible way. On the other hand, this would provide organizations with the opportunity to introduce their work. In this last case, the promotion of their work should not be their only pursuit but they should aim at the most massive social awareness and motivation of citizens for combating trafficking in persons. We should also bear in mind that Mass Media reference on the activities and services of non-governmental organizations does not exist or is inadequate, since in the majority of cases where reference is made, this is only to Greek Police.

Among the aspects that are not sufficiently presented, taking into account their significance are: the presentation of qualitative and quantitative data drawn from comprehensive research, the promotion of international, governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with the issue, the reference to measures and services available for victims in order to assist them to escape from their difficult situation.

The inadequate results brought up by the existing cooperation and co-assistance between journalists and organizations dealing with trafficking in persons should make both sides think hard, since there is wide room for improving the quality and frequency of disseminating the relevant information to the public.

The role of Mass Media in raising awareness against trafficking in human beings

Mass Media can play an important role in democratic procedures, as well as in controlling state power by civil society. These roles derive from the understanding of the constituting elements of the notion of active citizen. Under specific conditions, Mass Media can constitute a principal trigger for democratic education and information. The unobstructed access of the citizens to the necessary information sources is indispensable in order for them to be able to participate in democratic procedures. Citizens must have access to the widest possible information concerning public or political choices, deriving from a global presentation of different points of view and aspects of cases.

Information management depends on the choice of news and the hierarchic classification in which they will be presented, and on their framing with audio-visual and rhetoric techniques that adopt ideological stances. The choice and hierarchic classification of news constitute indeed the designation of public issues. This reveals the clear connection between the structure of Media news presentation and the issues that become topics of interest for public opinion.

Through the implementation of those practices Media are perceived as one of the most important factors in designating the two main fields of human activity, i.e. the private and public sphere. This feature can also refer to the relationship between the state and its citizens. The respect to one's diversity has been extensively discussed and analyzed and it has been identified as a basic legal principle. However, it is widely accepted, that the theoretical enforcement of this basic principle and its implementation in every-day practice on every aspect of human activity still remain distant.

One might assume that one of the main reasons for this distance is that the principle of human rights respect has not been adequately understood, not only at the institutional level, but also at the individual and psychological one. One large part of European societies was, in a certain way, "shocked" by the rapid, deep and radical changes that took place in Europe at the end of the 80s. This part of the society was accustomed to a given socio-economic and political status, unaffected for decades and adopted a clearly defensive stance towards the new circumstances. This stance derives from the perception of diversity "threat". This perception is extended to everything that is characterized, independently from the time when it appeared, as "deviating", using subjective criteria. In this way, general models of a "defensive civilization" are established.

The “tyranny” of the majority

These “defensive syndromes” are enhanced by TV rhetoric that contributes to the creation, affirmation and reproduction of ideological stereotypes and cultural prejudices and classifications. National and social identities are formed and redefined by the systematic and widely presented Media messages. TV is especially responsible for the establishment of a wide process of “education”, in the framework of which, the viewers are systematically exposed to a “selective approach” that tends to shape perceptions and values accordingly. TV constitutes a cultural means that facilitates, maintains, stabilizes and develops the existing systems of values, perceptions and stances. Within this ideological function of the Media, numerous factors and trends develop and may contribute to upgrading the citizen’s role. For achieving this, respect for polyphony, ethics, rule of law, social solidarity and protection of vulnerable groups are necessary conditions.

With regards to human trafficking, some Media, wishing to cut themselves off from the usual practices of populism, chase of impression, xenophobia, lust for terror and sexism, use their power in order to contribute to the protection of the rights of trafficking victims. Those rights do not differ from the rights enjoyed by all members of democratic societies. Therefore, it is imperative to try to guarantee the protection of personal data and of the dignity of trafficking victims. Their rights do not only relate to the elimination of their exploitation but also to their protection after their case becomes public. Victims need to be treated with discretion, respect for their dignity and their private life sphere. The reference of the name or other personal data may create a further risk for a person who has already been in a difficult position.

The role of Mass Media is particularly important for raising awareness and for accurately informing the public on trafficking in human beings with the aim of combating and preventing the phenomenon and sensitizing the society. The general public needs to be aware of potential risks threatening all citizens. It is of course understood that Mass Media, when covering an issue, should use appropriate definitions, preferring the use of the term “victims”, rather than “prostitutes”, which may mislead public opinion from the real problem.

In addition, sensualistic approaches should be avoided, as they create a blurry picture of the phenomenon and accuse the victims. Journalists dealing with the issue should respect ethics, take existing prejudices into account and operate in accordance with professional criteria. The right to have an opinion, to express it, or to make it public through the Media, is a fundamental right that is often described as the cornerstone of democracy. However, along with these rights come obligations, i.e. the obligation to respect one’s rights and reputation. Taking the above into account, it becomes obvious that media coverage of trafficking in persons is misleading.

The protection of citizens' security is provided by the Constitution to all residents in a country's territory. For victims of trafficking it is significantly important to guarantee their security, to avoid their exposure and not to create discriminatory conditions. However, these rights are mostly violated in the case of trafficking victims. Journalism has two main functions: to provide accurate information to the public on specific issues, and, to protect persons from risks resulting from the exposure of their case. Thus, journalists, before dealing with human trafficking and its consequences, have the duty to acquire the necessary knowledge and education on these issues. By doing so, they can avoid the creation of wrong impressions on the part of the public. Usually journalists deal with trafficking for sexual exploitation and not with other forms of trafficking, such as labor trafficking.

Mass Media as a raising awareness factor

Mass Media can contribute to more effectively combating trafficking in persons and protecting the victims. Smuggled migrant women are a group that runs a high risk of becoming victims of trafficking, since they are in a foreign country, with no valid travel documents or work permit, with no information on their status and their rights and obligations. Thus, having a limited range of options, they can easily become victims of trafficking. In this case, Mass Media contribution would be essential for the information of those persons on their situation, as well as for the awareness of the public on the dimensions and the aspects of the phenomenon.

The ignorance of the status of trafficking victims in the country of destination constitutes the main problem that leads to the persistence of the phenomenon. Victims do not have access to appropriate information on where to address themselves. Media can, in this framework, play a significant role in informing groups that are vulnerable to exploitation. It is particularly important for victims to get access to appropriate information on what they can do in case they are found in a foreign country as victims of trafficking and exploitation. What is very common is the fear of deportation, which is equivalent to the return to an undesirable routine, while many victims do not know which authority could assist them. Police is not always considered to be the best choice, as victims are usually afraid of what they risk to face. Often, they think that they will have to deal with a hostile attitude, or be subject to mockery. Sometimes it is possible that traffickers have access to a corrupted civil servant, fact that reduces victims' trust to them.

In addition, few states and few of their police authorities consider trafficking in human beings as serious as trafficking of weapons or drugs. Many times their approach resembles to the one adopted on simple migration policy issues. This explains also the lack of political will to effectively counter trafficking. Therefore, victims cannot receive the necessary information and assistance.

Furthermore, the situation of trafficking victims is not primarily due to the fact of their exploitation from other people. The fact of the lack of state and social awareness for the need to examine the hidden violence involved in trafficking is equally responsible. That is why the contribution of the Media is necessary. Mass Media can influence and inform a large part of public opinion. By studying the situation of the countries of origin of the victims, i.e. developing countries, countries in transition, from the South and the East, it becomes obvious that economic disparities, instability and discrimination against women are among the root causes of human trafficking. Moreover, the economic and social marginalization of women derives from changes of the social policy or from the return to traditional social values that pre-define specific roles for women.

Mass Media can present those data in such a manner as to sensitize public opinion, which apparently ignores those root causes of trafficking in persons. It is important to understand that victims did not deliberately put themselves in this situation, but they

ended up there because of factors that they sometimes could do nothing to avoid. On the other hand, through the Media, potential and existing victims of trafficking will get information on the living and working conditions in Europe, where the countries in which they end up are situated. They will be also informed on whether and how they will be able to get all legal papers for their lawful residence and work in a country. All these will particularly help younger women, who sometimes ignore the details and the procedures that regulate their residence in a third country. More importantly, they ignore the consequences and the risks they run when working in the "black" labor market.

The contribution of the Media is imperative in order to reduce stereotypes regarding trafficking victims. In the case of women who are sexually exploited, they are generally considered to have been aware of what they would do and to have consented to it. Most people tend to ignore the fact that these women are there because they have been deceived regarding the conditions and the type of their employment.

Moreover, other myths coming together with the phenomenon of trafficking in persons refer to victims being only white or foreign women. These assumptions are wrong, since trafficking in persons neither affects women of only one race or nationality, nor does it require border crossing. In addition, some people believe that only "easy" and of low educational level women end up as victims in the trafficking chain.

One more aspect of the role that the Media have in providing accurate information relates to the emphasis that they need to put not only on victims but also on traffickers. Many times, Media provide a certain picture of the traffickers, which reinforces existing stereotypes. As a result, in case traffickers in reality do not match the usually portrayed figure, they may not be identified as such. In many cases offenders may be persons belonging to the social circle of the victims. It is important to mention this because it contributes to the accurate presentation of the reality of the phenomenon, as well as because it helps potential victims to identify situations that may lead to their exploitation and trafficking.

This reference may help victims in a different way. Usually the public accuses victims for what they have been through, especially in cases that a victim is portrayed as leading a "deviating", according to the Media, life. For this reason, information concerning the victim's personal life, habits or appearance, do not add anything useful to the story and should be avoided in order to protect the victim.

Towards the appropriate approach & communication management of the phenomenon

The prudent and effective coverage of human trafficking cases acquires particular significance when it puts emphasis on the protection of victims and the respect to their rights. Journalists who cover those cases are required to pay attention to issues relating to the use of accurate terminology. Furthermore they should take into account that victims of trafficking are not only women, but also children, men and HIV patients, each category requiring a different treatment.

Mass Media can also play an important role in raising public awareness, especially on unknown aspects of the phenomenon. While journalists can reveal cases of trafficking in persons and promote the human rights of the victims, they can at the same time demonstrate a tolerant stance towards pornography and prostitution. The same Media may be transformed into “demand promoters”, by creating sexually provocative pictures in the news or in commercials.

The way victims are presented in the Media has an impact in the society and influences the citizens' behavior. In case of minors, it influences the way adults treat children and childhood. In addition, images of violence seen by children affect their aspirations for their own role in life. It has been discussed that the manner in which children are presented in many countries increases the threat that they may face.

Journalist's training

Journalists are required to be aware of their responsibilities when presenting human trafficking cases. The cooperation between organizations and journalists aiming at guaranteeing the human rights and the dignity of victims constitutes an important element that should be taken into account. If journalists are willing to apply those criteria, they are required to get appropriate training on real cases handled by organizations. Those organizations that deal with trafficking victims should be assured that Media can handle the issue in an appropriate way.

Professionals working in the Media are the most appropriate people to help those who do not know the market understand how it operates. They can give advice regarding how those organizations can collect and present information.

One way to establish a relationship between those organizations and the Media is the NGO involvement in the procedure of journalists' training. This will

provide the opportunity to both sides to understand how the other operates and which are the limitations that the other faces. NGOs can also play a precious role in encouraging victims to present their experience in the Media, guaranteeing at the same time that they are not exposed and that their fundamental human rights are not violated.

Journalists who cover trafficking cases need to deeply comprehend the phenomenon and all its aspects and forms. Trafficking in persons is not limited to the sexual exploitation of women. It also refers to forced labor provided in many industries, apart from the sexual industry. It additionally constitutes a violation of the fundamental human rights, often including violence and abuse. One more important aspect of the problem is that it derives from poverty and that victims can be women, men and children.

Journalists have to guarantee that the information they disseminate does not aggravate the victims' position. Trafficking in human beings constitutes an issue of high journalistic interest. It is however equally dangerous for persons involved in it. The way the phenomenon is presented shapes to a wide extent the manner in which the viewers, the Police and the politicians will deal with it in their own field. Dealing with trafficking in an incorrect way has a direct impact on the treatment of the victims themselves.

Special attention should be also paid to the issue of terminology used by journalists. The term "white flesh trade" is often used to describe the phenomenon. This term stigmatizes women, presenting them as prostitutes who cannot escape in any way from their situation, rather than as persons who need help and assistance. One other term used is "woman prostitute". Most trafficked women do indeed end up in prostitution. However, the systematic use of the term does not contribute to identifying the situation of violence these women are subject to. As a result the public does not become aware of the fact that these women did not chose to be in this situation.

In addition to the above, the right approach to the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings includes the effort to eliminate some existing myths and to present the phenomenon in all its aspects. Often human trafficking is linked to prostitution, even though other forms of trafficking do exist. The phenomenon can be approached through its various aspects, such as the economic, political, legal and humanitarian aspect, as well as in the field of security or organized crime. Additionally, it is important for Media to stress that trafficking in persons essentially constitutes a vast violation of fundamental human rights and liberties. Victims did not choose to be in this situation, but ended up there after being subjected to threats, deceit, force, violence and other means.

Journalists' sources of information

An important element for the presentation of the phenomenon is the appropriate way in which journalists should handle their sources. This is even more crucial when the source of information is the victim of trafficking itself. In this case it is imperative that the journalist understands the victim's situation and demonstrates the appropriate sensitivity.

For a trafficking victim the description of the difficult circumstances under which it turned into a victim of exploitation is an extremely intense process. These data are indeed precious primarily for the prosecution authorities, but also for the organizations that in any way assist victims after their identification. However, in those cases, even during an interview with a journalist, the victim's supervision by psychologists and psychiatrists minimizes the negative impact of the description's repetition.

There are cases when victims of trafficking become victims of excessive Media exposure and of their constant demand to repeatedly describe to Media journalists the events that constituted her/his obnoxious experience. The competent organizations responsible for the victims' psychosocial support try with all means to protect victims from this negative prospect. Nevertheless, journalists are also responsible, when the victim has already managed to overcome this situation and become independent. The fact that a journalist may have acquired the victim's agreement to be interviewed does not discharge him from his responsibility. It is recommended to journalists to avoid such practices and for every information they need to turn to the competent state and non-governmental agencies that respond willingly. Even if some Media ignore this recommendation, they should be very meticulously attentive in the way that they handle the interviewed victim. This is so because these persons, even after their social reintegration and the psychological support they have received, remain vulnerable and need psychological peacefulness and balance, which may be violently disturbed in case of sudden publicity or exposure of their extremely sensitive personal data.

For example, when the interview is published, it is important to protect the victim's identity and its voice –in case of TV Media- should be electronically altered. For the security and protection of the victim the reference to details should be avoided, as they are not useful and at the same time they may lead to the victim's identification. In addition, victims should be informed of the possible consequences that the public exposure of their story may have. Journalists are responsible to inform victims of potential risks, in case they are not in a position to calculate them themselves. Victims have the right to refuse an interview or to refuse to answer all questions that may be posed in its course. At the same time, journalists should avoid putting pressure on victims in order to get useless details that only aim at attracting viewers and readers.

The journalist's duty to inform and the public's right to be informed are not questioned. However, rules of ethics and the priority of the victim's interest should not be ignored. Studying the conditions of trafficking in human beings may lead to the revelation of corruption, which contributes to the perpetual nature of the problem. In any case victims are in the worst position. This is mainly the case when articles are written on the basis of only one source. A woman, in an already painful situation of exploitation, may be further harmed from the inconsiderate handling of her situation.

This is why journalists are asked to handle the issue, as if the victim had been a member of their family. Victims are indeed the most interesting part of a trafficking case and journalists want a story like that. Nevertheless, sometimes they ignore that

victims are in a vulnerable situation and are not protected.

Also, even though the public feels compassion for the victim, journalists should remain neutral. If they feel pity instead of understanding, the issue will appear in a compassionate manner that will not provide answers to important questions concerning trafficking in human beings. Questions during the victim's interview should be posed in such a way as to obtain answers that are not pre-dictated and the victim is not criticized. The journalist, when approaching a victim of trafficking and presenting her/his problem, has to sympathize with the victim and be determined not to present his reportage, if this may pose a risk, in any way, either to the victim itself, or to its family or friends' circle.

It is wiser for a journalist not to deal with an issue if he is not sure to be able to handle it with responsibility and professionalism. In dealing with trafficking issues the contribution of another journalist with relevant experience would be useful. What would be even better is the establishment of a team to work on the issue. In that way, all information is checked, more than once, and people working together assess each other.

It is often easier for women journalists to approach women-victims. Many times victims were found in painful situations because of men, what makes reasonable the fact that a woman covering their story makes them feel more secure. This is not the rule, of course. The victim's trust to a journalist depends on his/her preparation, the circumstances under which the meeting takes place and the journalist's ability to adapt.

From the moment that a victim expresses the determination to share her/his experience, she/he needs to do so, independently from her/his motive, the details of this traumatic experience and her/his age or education. A good professional is a good listener who knows when to pose questions and when to remain silent.

Other sources used by journalists in their work are equally important. The majority of articles on trafficking in persons are based on statistical data provided by the Police authorities. The fact that police is the main source of information cannot be avoided. Journalists should not be limited to information that accuses victims instead of the traffickers who are the ones that led victims in situations of exploitation and violence.

It is easier to write the obvious, especially when that comes easy. It is simpler to disseminate police information on women with no legal papers, than to conduct research on the general framework of a trafficking story. In such cases, journalists become police representatives instead of providing information to the public, asking all possible questions – even if in the beginning no satisfactory answers are provided to the issues concerned.

Journalists must not accept all data they collect without conducting research and analysis. Such a choice would degrade their level of professionalism and the value of their work. It would also lead to negative results, such as the inadequate or misleading

public awareness or the one-sided presentation of the issue. If journalists are based too much on one single source, they may become dependent on this, risking in any possible manner their impartiality.

In case statistical data exist, it is important to clearly evaluate their significance. Potential mistakes in their interpretation may lead to the misunderstanding of the phenomenon. In this case too, sources of information must be credible, while data that seem to be contradictory should be clarified.

Minors

Children are another category of victims of trafficking. It should be noted that the term "children" defines all persons under 18 years old. To cover the issue of trafficking in children, one must have access to a wide range of information concerning children. Journalists should only decide to present in public information on minor victims of trafficking provided that the children's fundamental human rights are in advance guaranteed. While most adults are usually in a position to decide on the range of personal information they expose to the public through the Media, children are not. They might feel impressed or terrified by the Media exposure, according to their age and experience. There is no inequality between a journalist and a child. In case there is, this may lead to the child's exploitation.

Media professionals, as the rest of adults, must respect minors and provide them with the necessary opportunities to express their experiences and ideas. Although their pictures are used to portray poverty or fear, Media do not seek their feelings for the situation they are facing or their ideas for possible solutions. In such a case though, journalists should take into account whether the child or adolescent indeed realizes how the material collected will be used. Not all minors are in the same position to be able to understand all aspects of their case. In modern reality, children's rights are not in force for all in an equal way. Children can become victims of abuse, either due to their exploitation, or due to indifference. Moreover, the circumstances leading to the exploitation of children are sometimes out of their families' control. Journalists covering trafficking in persons, especially when children are involved, should take these facts into account.

Mass Media can play an important role in promoting children's rights in trafficking cases. In dealing with the issue, after identifying the problem, they can move forward presenting children's and others' interviews that demonstrate the causes of the problem, its consequences or even how the exploitation of children can be eradicated. The usual virtues of journalism, such as, good connections, integrated research, and information verification using a variety of sources stand for this case too.

However, it is easier to make an impression to the public on an issue, than to examine it in depth. It is easy to produce a quick reference to trafficking in children, using limited sources and research. It can however be misleading for the public and can reinforce existing stereotypes. Minors can be even accused for getting involved in an organized trafficking ring. Many articles, when referring to trafficking in minors, use such a language that gives the impression that those children are responsible for their situation. At the same time, little is said for the customers who exploited those children.

In the best occurrence, Mass Media, in addition to what has been already mentioned, can shed some light to the situation. This can derive from long-term research conducted by the Media, or through their cooperation with NGOs that can help, not only in revealing dark sides of children's exploitation but also in promoting children's rights.

The more accurately the Media approach trafficking in minors, the more prevention initiatives are reinforced. Although trafficking in children is an important research topic, it only constitutes a small part of sexual or other form of children's exploitation. Exploitation will take place wherever people and money exist. Journalists have a precious role in presenting facts and causes of this situation. They can inform the public about the trafficking chain, the people that profit out of it, as well as the victims' health risks.

Interviews with children victims must take place only in secure conditions for children, bearing in mind the above exploitation as well as the risk of revenge. Journalists can cooperate with an NGO that children trust and can be a precious adviser. Those interviews should not be conducted only with the presence of the journalist. The presence of another adult from the child's circle is also required. Furthermore, the interview's conditions should not give the impression of putting pressure on the child and should not make the child feel that he/she is a Media "client". Questions should be addressed to the child and not to the adult, who is just escorting the child, without interfering in the course of the interview. Journalists who interview children victims must be certain that the children are aware of the fact that everything said will be presented in public.

It is important to avoid presenting pictures of children victims of trafficking in the Media, for the protection of their security. As it is the case for all trafficking victims, in children's case their identity needs to be protected as well. It is principally important to avoid the leak of pictures or other data that might lead to the children's identification.

Some useful concluding guidelines

- Before dealing with issues of trafficking in persons, journalists should themselves be informed on the phenomenon by an expert. In that way, they will use accurate terms, they will present a more comprehensive coverage and they will be able to inform the public in an accurate manner.
- The basic principle in the work of a journalist dealing with trafficking issues is not to cause further harm to the victim. This is especially the case when information provided refers to victims' personal stories. The guarantee of the personal data protection is a significantly important issue. Mass Media should not underestimate or ignore the determination and ability of traffickers to take revenge on victims who have escaped or/and testified against them. Therefore, Mass Media should protect the identity of the victims, avoiding the publication their personal data (i.e. name, current location, etc) or data that make reference to their identity and reveal it, at the end (i.e. current location, details on the victim's experience, etc).
- The terminology used should aim at providing accurate information and awareness to the public on trafficking in human beings and not at presenting the victims' with negative features and strengthening myths related to their traumatic experience.
- It is important that pictures and photos included in articles or shows respect the victims' personality and do not present sex scenes from bar or brothels. Sexual scenes may be popular to the reader but at the same time they are misleading.
- In every publication on trafficking in persons it is important to dedicate some space to inform the public on the services available for the protection of and assistance to the victims, as well as for the work of relevant organizations.
- Trafficking in human beings is not limited to trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation. Other forms of trafficking are identified both internationally and in Greece, such as trafficking for labor exploitation, trafficking for the removal of organs, trafficking for servitude in private houses, trafficking in children for begging, trafficking of brides and so on...Mass Media should present all forms of trafficking, raising awareness and sensitizing the public in a comprehensive manner.
- In cases of identification of organized trafficking rings, usually the nationality of victims and not of traffickers (recruiters, escorts, exploiters) is revealed. To a wide extent the latter happen to be Greek citizens. It is significant to present the nationality and other social characteristics of traffickers, in order to eliminate existing myths relating to the nature of criminality in Greece.
- Due to the emphasis that Media put on "sex stories" and the focus on the sexual element, the public confuses victims with the stereotype of prostitutes. Therefore, it is

important that Media present the social characteristics of the victims, their vulnerable position –both in their country of origin and in Greece- and the consequences of exploitation in their personal health and life in general.

- Finally, we consider important that Mass Media inform the public on the phenomenology of the crime of trafficking in human beings. The debate should be raised, not through putting emphasis on specific events, but through providing awareness on the nature of the phenomenon, the profits it generates, its international and local trends and its consequences in our society.

Trafficking in human beings, constituting a hideous violation of fundamental human rights, is a modern form of slavery. At the same time it is one of the most changeable and difficult to control forms of organized crime. Trafficking in persons degrades human dignity, perverts public life, increases corruption, and generates huge profits for the international organized crime rings. It also undermines the human security and the development perspective of other parts of the world. The reasons why human trafficking is recognized as a major issue of human security protection are the following: a) it links organized crime with human rights violations, b) it fosters corruption, c) it mainly affects the vulnerable groups of women and children, d) it is on the rise during periods of armed conflicts and political instability, and, e) it requires the complex and coordinated actions among states, NGOs and international organizations.

Criminal trafficking networks are unfortunately one step ahead of the law-enforcement mechanisms and the social solidarity structures of states and humanitarian organizations. Their weapon is the huge profits they generate, undermining consciousness, fostering corruption and buying their impunity. Organized trafficking rings can secure the best criminal lawyers or can develop a faultless social profile. But their most powerful weapon is what is known as "happy trafficking". This is a process of eliminating the dignity of the victim, who gradually stops hoping and fighting for its rescue. Some euros per day and a day-off are usually enough to prevent the victim from trying to escape and cooperating with the authorities.

The problem is extremely complex and multifaceted. It requires the cooperation and coordination among many state agencies, international and non-governmental organizations and governments. It also calls for prevention campaigns and development policies in countries of origin, in order for potential victims to be informed and root-causes to be dealt with.

Public awareness and accurate information is extremely important. Mass Media decisively contribute to our perception and understanding of the world and to orienting our role inside it. Given that trafficking in human beings being is an immense human rights violation, the whole society needs to fight against it. To this aim, the contribution by the Media is extremely important!

The Guide is the product of cooperation among the following partners of the DP 'ASPIDDA'

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