**17th meeting of the Awareness Raising and Training Working Group in Human Trafficking- Dublin, Ireland.**

**Report prepared by Joan Roddy, APT member.**

The 17th Meeting of the Awareness Raising and Training Working Group in Human Trafficking took place on Thursday, 15 May, 2018. The meeting was chaired by Mr Paul Gunning, Principal Officer, Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU).

Present were representatives of

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| * Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU)
* Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP)
* Health Service Executive (HSE)
* Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)
* Human Trafficking Investigation and Coordination Unit (HTICU)
* Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT).
* Donegal Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
 | * Invisible Traffick
* International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
* MECPATHS
* Men’s Development Network
* Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)
* Ruhama
* Sisters of Charity
* Soroptomist International
* US Embassy
* Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.
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Other groups on the invitees’ list were unable to attend.

*US Embassy input* Mr Kevin Furey from the Political and Economic Office of the US Embassy in Dublin spoke of the TIP reports. As part of his role, he sends information about the end of June each year to be included in the TIP annual Report. He explained that the Tier1 – Tier 2 – Tier 3 approach aims to document how countries have done in comparison with their performance the previous year.

*AHTU Update* AHTU gave an update on the ongoing work to improve their website. It is hoped that the forthcoming AHTU Annual Report will be more reader-friendly and will be available in the coming months. The Chair spoke of the plan to make further grants available - through the Dormant Accounts Fund - for awareness raising activities and encouraged the coming together of a number of organisations to make a joint application for a particular project. Moves are afoot to have National Divisional Protective Services Bureaux throughout the 28 Garda divisions, with a focus *inter alia* on human trafficking. So far, two have been established in Blanchardstown and one in Dundalk.

*Updates on recent activities* While, ahead of time, six organisations, including APT, had been requested to present updates on their work, in the course of the meeting all present got the opportunity to speak of recent, current and forthcoming activities of their group. MECPATHS was congratulated on receiving a reward for their work to counter human trafficking in the hotel sector. Among new projects presented was that at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, introduced by Mr Michael Healy, and due to begin this June (2018). As part of the Santa Marta initiative, MIC, in conjunction with the Gardai/PSNI and the Justice departments of the Republic and NI, will engage in research to measure the scope and scale of modern slavery on the island of Ireland. This project, engaging a fulltime professional researcher for two years, has as title *Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Ireland* and will focus not on persons as such, but rather on data collection/management/analysis. Attention was drawn to the fact that there is little awareness of the enactment of the Criminal Offences Bill 2017 or understanding of its content or implications. Concern was voiced by the groups present about the low number of convictions to date.

*EU Anti Trafficking Day 2018 EU CPN Project* From 18 October next, the EU is launching an international awareness raising media campaign, with flyers, leaflets etc appropriate to each country and with hashtags on line.

*Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland -* October 2016The chair spoke of the need to revisit the Action Plan and to re-focuson its recommendations.

End Report.