

Nicosia, 18 October 2018

## EU Anti-Trafficking Day Panel Discussion in Nicosia

On the occasion of EU Anti-Trafficking Day, the European Commission held a panel on Thursday, 18 October 2018 from 10:00 to 12:00 at EU Programme Support Office (EUPSO) in Nicosia. The aim of this year's EU Anti-Trafficking Day event was to increase awareness on the rights of human trafficking victims and to highlight best practices in victim support services.

During the panel discussion, the EU policy on the rights of trafficking victims and implementations in EU Member States, the US Department of State 2018 Trafficking in Persons report findings and local implementations, opportunities and recommendations on preventing trafficking of human beings were presented.

The EU Anti-Trafficking Day was established by the European Commission in 2007 and is marked on 18 October of every year. The main purpose has been to raise awareness on trafficking in human beings and increase the exchange of information, knowledge and best practices amongst the different actors working in this field. EU Anti trafficking Day serves as an occasion to bolster Europe-wide commitment for ending trafficking in human beings, to raise awareness, exchange know-how and best practices, and take stock of what has been achieved. Trafficking in human beings is a grave human rights violation and it is prohibited by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The European Commission this year launched a EUR 1,000,000 call for proposals in the Turkish Cypriot community aiming to prevent and address trafficking in human beings in the northern part of Cyprus. The main objectives of the Call for Proposals are to prevent human trafficking and raise awareness, to improve victims' access to rights and to increase knowledge of and effective and coordinated response to all forms of trafficking in human beings. In addition to this, an EU funded report published by local NGO MAGEM confirms that the northern part of Cyprus is a zone of impunity for human trafficking, emphasising the lack of victim support services.

### **Background:**

***The annual EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October makes both policymakers and the general public reflect upon the response to trafficking in human beings in Europe. Countries still face challenges in properly identifying trafficked persons, providing them with adequate assistance, prosecuting perpetrators and measuring the overall impact of such actions.***

***In order to better assist practitioners and authorities in the Member States to deliver the assistance and protection to victims, the European Commission publishes the document 'The EU rights of victims of trafficking' in all official EU languages. The EU approach places the victim and its human rights at the centre of its coordinated, multidisciplinary action to work towards eradication of trafficking in human beings.***

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