



First European Santa Marta Conference

Eradication of Modern Slavery

How can we succeed? Human Trafficking and Labour exploitation in Europe

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Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation – How Do We Stop It?

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Dear Mrs Gayer, Excellencies, Eminence, Colleagues

This workshop is important, because progress in overcoming the problem is disappointing. We need a major scaling up of actions to reduce and end human trafficking, in Europe and globally.

ILO and Churches, both having global reach, can address the issue of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) in complementary ways. Dr Wissing laid out a complex agenda. Because of these complexities it is also a research issue. Responding to the call by Pope Francis, the Pontifical Academies of Science and of Social Sciences have held 16 international workshops and conferences on modern slavery since 2013 with researchers, practitioners, and judges.

In search of solutions we in the Pontifical Academies address human trafficking in all its dimensions – labor exploitation, trafficking for sexual exploitation, and also organ trafficking. We must consider both **direct trafficking** in human beings, and **indirect trafficking** through trade of goods and services that contain slave labor.

We must be aware that we are up against very powerful forces. The market of human trafficking is part of the large **markets of violence**. In such markets, violent entrepreneurs manage supply and demand with extortion and engage on domestic and international markets for human trafficking, drugs and weapons. Complementing Thomas Wissings' helpful presentation, I want to emphasize two sets of action areas on the supply and demand side of these markets of violence:

Firstly, marginalization fosters the supply side of human trafficking. Marginality means people being kept at the margins of society, and excluded from opportunity. This is the case between countries and within countries – for instance because of ethnicity or gender. For example, the current hunger crises in the horn of Africa and the misery in the snowed-under refugee camps around Syria enhance the supply side of human trafficking because the victims have few alternatives. Too little attention is on these factors of supply.

What can we do about this supply side?

1. Parents should be supported to keep their children in school, and schools must make children aware of THB issues. Cash transfers for keeping low-income children in schools are a good option, as shown in Bangladesh.
2. Targeted social programs with cash and food transfers for low-income households and their children are another set of proven instruments. EU funding for expansion of social programs is to be considered.
3. Employment programs focused on the rural and urban poor also should be considered, especially to address youth unemployment

In short: the supply side of THB must be addressed by social policy, education, and jobs. All three of these.

Secondly, we need to address root causes of human trafficking on the demand side

The greater the global inequity and misery, the higher the growth in demand for slave labor, because it pays for the traffickers. The tremendous and unacceptable growth in inequality is a root cause.

THB is most often found in labor-intensive industries and services where labor laws are circumvented. These include: Agriculture and fishing, construction, and mining, prostitution and sexual exploitation, and illegal activities such as drug trading. The list of products at risk of modern slavery is known. Monitoring value chains by blockchain may help.

What can we do on the demand side?

1. Legal and police actions. We must ask for massive expansion of the criminal justice system not only inside the EU, but the EU should offer support for that abroad.

2. Victim support strategies and programs.

3. Internet monitoring and engagement with action for prevention. And much more engagement by journalists and monitoring social media.

The Church must help change mindsets related to the problem. The Church must continue to be the well-informed watchdog in the fight against modern slavery. And we must mobilize to make it much more difficult for political decision-makers to continue to tacitly accept slavery in our time, not taking the investment and control actions.

Sources: selected events at Pontifical Academies of Sciences and of Social Sciences

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