

**International round table: Re-branding Human Trafficking, The interface of migration,
Human trafficking and slavery**

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In 2016, the Comité Contre l'Esclavage Moderne (Committee against Modern Slavery – CCEM), created in 1994 and based in France, provided victims legal and social assistance to 168 victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) for labour exploitation. The CCEM action is mainly targeting victims of THB in French territories or those victims who were exploited by French citizens in other countries. Our identification process is based on French legislations. Each year the CCEM receives 300-350 alerts. Our judicial action is based mainly on French legislations and the CCEM would also refer cases to the European Human Rights Court when needed ((Case of *Siliadin v. France*, no. 73316/01, 2005 and *C.N.&V. v. France*, no. 67724/09, 2012).

The majority of victims assisted by the CCEM are women: currently 75% for the cases still in process but with higher rate of men in new cases since 2014 (**SLIDE**: 11%, 27%, 44%). Women victims are mainly exploited in domestic work and care (children, disabled or seniors). Men are exploited in constructions, agriculture, small enterprises (butcherries, bakeries, restaurants, etc..). The fact that more women are identified globally as victims might be related to the fact they can more easily ask for help and take the courage and opportunity to run away since they receive more help in doing so. Their vulnerability is more easily detected than men.

In 2016, the victims assisted by the CCEM came from 45 different countries (**MAP 2016**).The majority from North and West Africa, in particular from Morocco (23%), Ivory Coast (7%), Senegal, (6%), Algeria (6%), Democratic Republic of Congo (4.4%), Cameroon (4%) or else from Pakistan (4%) and the Philippines (4%).

The exploiters often come from the same countries as the victim, 70% in 2016 compared to 62% in 2015.

My intervention is not about questioning the feminisation of the migration route or vulnerability of women victims of THB for labour exploitation. It means more to bring facts about vulnerability of all economic migrant with harder migration policies putting them in greater risk of THB for labour exploitation. This is based on our observations since our action is mainly targeting the social assistance and legal support for victims identified in French territories, the migration route taken are analysed on individual basis. We don't have yet a global analysis of the different routes followed according to the victims country origin or professional sector, etc..

Although we did not identify a clear link between the migration process and the exploitation later, we have observed some general tendencies based on data collected during the identification phase then during the legal support process. Those are:

- Most of the victims assisted by the CCEM has been recruited by their future exploiters in their country of origin. 82% in general had their migration organised by the exploiter since their departure.
Such observation should also be linked to the fact that the victims and the exploiters are from the same nationalities (70% in 2016) and are approached by their compatriots in their own countries to recruit them and organise their travel to France.
- Victims of labour exploitation are mainly economic migrant, attracted by opportunities to work based, unfortunately, on false promises. The future exploiters are organising their travel, mostly on temporary visas, and then using their irregular stay once their visas expire, to put more pressure on them (threatening them or promising to arrange the stay permit and gaining time)
- Although we should mention that less victims are arriving by plane. While in 2014, 79% arrived by air, this ratio dropped to 63% in 2015 then to **41%** in 2016
- Exploiters organising the travel remain the case for majority of women victims (85%), in particular those exploited in domestic work. Only 9% of trafficked women made their way to Europe on their own. This is less the case for men where we can observe an important number (41%) who came by their own means (regular or irregular)

SLIDE

- The victims assisted by the CCEM are rarely coming from the current conflict countries like Syria, Irak, etc.. and we had very rare victims who has been through the current migration routes although some came through Turkey, but those cases remain rare.
- The increasing number of male victims according to our analysis is also not related to the migration crisis neither. We believe this is more due to:
 - o a better understanding of the phenomenon of THB for labour exploitation by the alerting individuals or institutions. Even if this is still not as visible as the cases of sexual exploitation (because they are working behind closed doors) but our national campaigns and information actions is strongly correlated with the increase of alerts. And we believe this is helping in identifying new case of THB for labour exploitation, among those men cases.
 - o The cases of men referred to us are mostly those who had been in very difficult and violent situations. The victims may have spent a long time on the street or accepted very bad working and living conditions with health problems reducing their capacities to work to end up running away or dismissed by the exploiters
- Although it is still difficult in legal proceedings to prove men vulnerability when it comes to migrant workers.
- The decision to escape from their exploiters is more correlated to sickness, violence, ill treatment (mainly from the kids) than work conditions or unpaid (although very low) salaries. Many can work under extremely exploitative conditions, without health care, unaware of their rights, subject to physical and mental abuse, underpaid, or their wages withheld by exploiters.

In most of the cases, they might be aware of the work conditions that await them and entered into these 'contractual' arrangements in full knowledge of their terms. Despite the difficulties encountered in France, they still feel better off than those at home in poverty-stricken regions. They decide to leave and seek help when an brutal 'rupture' takes place: sickness, more violence, illtreatment from children...

- An observed tendency in our data is the increase in cases of multiple exploitations, especially for those who made the journey by their own means. This is correlated some times with the accommodation promise (against services) made by exploiters (33% in 2016 and 37.8% in 2015) or the work permit. Thus, victims are already in the French territories and needed an accommodation opportunity or to find a regular administrative status.

Their irregular status in the country obstruct every possibility for them to get a work or an accommodation and make them thus more vulnerable to new exploitations.

- In our daily work, we might also be faced by situations where identified and assisted victims, in the process of getting their regular administrative status as a THB victim, are at high risk of exploitation again. The migration policies and slow reactions to the THB need for protection, keep the victim in irregular or very unstable administrative status, thus unable to access work opportunities, long term accommodation or any other mean to allow them a professional or social integration.

Where the desperate need for work meets the demand for cheap unprotected labour market, exploiters form the link between this demand and the vulnerables who can satisfy it.

This is especially so where regular migration channels are obstructed. Although not all illegal migrant workers are trafficking victims, irregular migrants are most vulnerable.

The traffickers are the main winner when it comes to harsher migration policies. Such policies are offering them a greater opportunity to increase pressure on the victims, get them more invisible and 'underground', and vulnerable and thus have more freedom to impose worst work conditions.

What if migration policies attempt to protect the victims instead of obstructing the rights for the most vulnerable men and women?

Something to do?

- impose the full implementation of the European convention against human trafficking (90 days reflexion period, dissociation of victim's identification from the judicial procedure, compensation, etc...)
- give NGOs more means to continue their actions to protect and assist victims mainly on the EU level: make sure that the EU state members gives combating THB a priority in their nationally managed AMIF funding (75% of the AMIF funding) . In France ofr instance those fundings are only to assist regular migrants, thus NGOs working with victims of THB who are in irregular situation cannot benefit from such funding on the national level.