



Sensitizing the Tourism Industry to Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism

Signing the CC is only the first formal step to prevent sexual exploitation of children in tourism, but does not imply long-term commitment and behavioural change. To push for full implementation, the OSCE continues its efforts in both countries to ensure:

- organization of the signing ceremony in Albania
- continued support to monitoring committees in action plans implementation
- training for all CC signatories on CC implementation
- training on identifying cases of CSEC (in co-operation with anti-trafficking units, NGOs and UNICEF) and law enforcement activities
- exchange field visits for tourism stakeholders to other implementing countries.

At this stage, it is too early to evaluate the CC promotion measures in Montenegro and Albania, as activities in the industry have just started. It can be assumed that the project contributed to an increased awareness regarding the problem of trafficking, CSEC and the CC. However, in order to achieve a measurable change in public awareness, a long-term research design is necessary.

Perspectives

On international level, the awareness in the tourism industry is slowly changing, e.g. tourists report more cases of CSEC, which indicates an increased awareness of the problem. But nonetheless, there are not enough tourists being informed and appropriately sensitized, because the issue is not yet presented outright enough through the tourism business.

Essential Elements For Successful CC Implementation:

- A lead agency or co-ordination mechanism resulting in an institutionalized national monitoring committee,
- Political commitment and support of the highest tourism authority (e.g. Ministry of Tourism),
- Inter-governmental and cross-institutional co-operation, especially among ministries, child protection organizations, anti-trafficking agencies and law enforcement,
- Local tourism industry commitment and co-operation with foreign signatories and operators to recognize the business value,
- Regular information for the public and for tourism stakeholders on the issue and risks of CSEC to achieve sustainable awareness and behavioural change,
- Long-term funding mechanism for CC sustainability.

The code of conduct, being one instrument to respond to CSEC, is only achievable through long-term efforts. The impact of the CC is limited if implemented alone – it must be coupled with other prevention and child protection efforts, such as awareness raising and education in schools and increased law enforcement.



Update 2008

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The GTZ convention project "Protection of Minors against Sexual Exploitation" is supporting partner countries on behalf of BMZ in implementing the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Further information is available from:
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH
 Health, Education and Social Protection Division,
 Convention Project "Protection of Minors against Sexual Exploitation"
 T +49 (0) 6196-79-1512
 F +49 (0) 6196-79-801512
 E nochildabuse@gtz.de
 I www.gtz.de/nochildabuse



Lessons learned

The Context

In the Balkan states, commercial sexual exploitation of children is a serious problem facing many of the countries badly hit by the fall-out of economic restructuring, social dislocation and conflict. The causes of commercial sexual exploitation of children are complex and involve many interrelated factors. Poverty, lack of education, family breakdown, crime and corruption, gender discrimination, and a desperate search for a better life make children and their families more vulnerable for exploitation in many ways; these factors contribute to the growing commercial sex business and the trafficking in young women and children. Albania and Montenegro are countries of origin and transit for trafficking in human beings. Especially women and girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation, both across the countries and abroad, preferably to Western Europe.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

The term commercial sexual exploitation of children (or CSEC) is used to describe the various activities that exploit children for their commercial value including child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking in children for sexual purposes. The term implies that the child is not only sexually abused but that there is a profit arising from the transaction - in cash or kind - where the child is considered to be a sexual and commercial object.

The growth in tourism, alongside other factors, has led to the expansion of the leisure infrastructure. This in turn has unintentionally contributed to the growth in prostitution and trafficking in human beings. The protection of children and adolescents against CSEC is a difficult task; no single stakeholder, whether it is the government, a non governmental- organization or an international agency, can face the problem on its own. Against this background, non-governmental and governmental organizations support the tourism business in meeting these challenges, developing effective preventive measures and sensitizing the duty bearers in the tourism industry to CSEC.

The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE¹ Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) initiated the project "Public-Private Co-operation in the Prevention of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Minors in Travel

and Tourism in Albania and Montenegro" as part of the regional Anti-Trafficking Programme on Public-Private Cooperation in the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings. The project was established to sensitize the tourism sector and business community on how they could contribute to combating trafficking and sexual exploitation. OSCE introduced the international "Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism" (CC) to Southeast Europe as a preventive tool against CSEC. The Convention Project "Protection of Minors against Sexual Exploitation" (GTZ) funded the project from 2005 to 2007.

¹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Objective

The public-private partnership approach aims to sensitize the local tourism industry to CSEC, trafficking in human beings and the CC, in order to help prevent commercial sexual crimes against minors and enhance social responsibility and standards within the private sector. Activities mainly focused on the adoption of the CC in Montenegro and Albania through establishing communication and cooperation among non-traditional partners, such as the Ministries of Tourism and Ministries of Interiors, NGOs and tourism enterprises as well as a monitoring committee comprised of stakeholders from the tourism industry, governmental institutions and civil society. In support of this process, this fact sheet highlights experiences from Montenegro and Albania on how the tourism business can contribute to the prevention of CSEC.

In 1998, the NGO ECPAT² Sweden initiated the development of the "Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism" (CC). The CC is a voluntary self-regulating mechanism to promote socially responsible tourism through a set of six criteria. They call for the establishment of an ethical policy regarding sexual exploitation of children in tourism, continuous training of staff and the provision of information on the issue. Hotels and other partners sign to monitor and report on the CC implementation. The main message is that sexual exploitation of children is not acceptable and that the implementation of the CC can strengthen the efforts of government and civil society to combat the problem. To date more than 850 enterprises, tour operators and hotels have signed the CC.

² End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes





Source: OSCE

Why Addressing the Tourism Industry?

The GTZ-supported project is based on the observation that CSEC and tourism are closely related. The commercial sexual exploitation of children has paralleled the growth of tourism in many parts of the world. Tourism is certainly not the sole cause of the problem; however, the business provides potential abusers with anonymity and an environment conducive to seeking out susceptible children. The tourism industry has a responsibility to protect children and can respond to CSEC through establishing social standards as part of its corporate social responsibility (e.g. through a code of conduct). Children's rights are an integral part of social standards and a prerequisite for substantial targets of responsible sustainability, also in tourism. From the business viewpoint, a code of conduct can provide industry members with a voluntary and more flexible approach to addressing certain societal concerns and provide guidance on how industry could take corporate social responsibility. The broad public outreach of the tourism industry provides the opportunity for greater awareness raising of the problem and its potential solutions.

The Project Approaches

The OSCE representatives in Montenegro and Albania are the lead facilitators to promote the adoption and implementation of the CC in these countries. In the process, the main challenge is to achieve long-term sustainable behavioural change towards the problem and a sense of responsibility among the stakeholders. Different approaches have been employed in the project and have been combined to identify targets including:

Ownership

Supporting governmental ownership is a fundamental element in fostering inter-sectoral cooperation and financial resources. In Montenegro, the tourism industry is seen as the main source of economic development. Therefore it was important to have the highest tourism authority, the Ministry of Tourism, on board as the main counterpart in the project. The positive result was that governmental ownership and commitment generated surprisingly broad interest among tourism stakeholders throughout the country.

Access to Information

Information on CSEC and trafficking in both countries is limited and while e.g. trafficking in children is viewed as a problem, the civil society does not appear to be sufficiently informed about the issue on a large scale. Producing information material with a wide distribution can help sensitizing the public to the specific issue. The stakeholders in Montenegro and Albania respectively developed promotional material including posters and flyers providing specific contact numbers for assistance and distributed them at tourism enterprises, schools,

public buildings and as well as border crossing points. Individuals entering Montenegro and Albania are informed about the national laws on child exploitation and are reminded of the commitment of the government against CSEC.

Capacity Development

The development of training modules and training material (manuals, guidelines etc.) on the CC implementation constitutes a range of essential tools for the ongoing capacity development process for the sustainable response to CSEC.

The lead facilitators provided training sessions for tourism representatives in each country in order to encourage the industry to discuss the situation from the perspective of the private sector. The aim was to impart the industry's responsibilities and to ensure they had the understanding and necessary local contacts, among law enforcement and civil society, to respond appropriately to a CSEC situation. Further trainings were related to possible development of a regional approach to sexual exploitation and trafficking and international standards on the rights of the children among others complementing the CC.

Monitoring

The Code of Conduct and global Code Secretariat obliges Code signatories to annually monitor and report on their activities. Such an annual review forms an important basis for systematic learning and are essential to monitor the effectiveness of the CC. A local monitoring mechanism is essential to ensure multi-sectoral participation and continued commitment to the process.

In Montenegro and Albania, respective national multi-stakeholder Monitoring Committees have been established and tasked with continued promotion of the CC and ensuring stakeholders and signatories remain active in the process. Each Committee is chaired by a tourism

business representative (e.g. a tourism association). The initial task of each Committee was to develop a Plan of Action to guide the structured promotion and implementation of the CC. An important task in Montenegro was to continue lobbying among government agencies, industry and other stakeholders to expand the implementation of the CC as well as awareness of CSEC among society. Such efforts in Montenegro have resulted in an agreement between the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education to bring information to the public schools and students. The committee as a multi-disciplinary and self-regulating mechanism, can also help bring transparency and sustainability to responses to CSEC.

Impacts and Lessons Learned

The promotional and lobbying process for the Code in **Montenegro** concluded with the signing ceremony of the CC, highlighting the positive results of the GTZ supported phase I of the project. In September 2006, the CC was signed by an extraordinary number of 288 tourism companies. This large commitment was due to strong governmental commitment and the "door to door" contact by the National Steering-Monitoring Committee to explain the value of the CC to individual tourism stakeholders who had not participated in the round tables and training sessions. This communication strategy turned out to be highly effective, yet underscores the time-consuming process and resource commitment necessary for proper CC implementation.

In **Albania**, initial consultations resulted in drafting of a Code of Ethics for Albanian Tourism Service Providers, based upon the UNWTO Code of Ethics and local interest to address other issues impacting the tourism sector. The CC is an integral part of the Code of Ethics, and industry stakeholders have expressed support for both.

Where as Montenegro benefited from the strong government ownership led by the Ministry of Tourism in cooperation with the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, the Albanian tourism authority was initially hesitant to promote the Code process. Post election changes to government structures postponed project activities to early 2007. The success in Montenegro serve, in part, to initiate a regional dynamic leading to more interest and commitment in Albania. This suggests that transnational regional exchange of experiences with the CC implementation is of importance in developing national responses to CSEC.

In February 2007, the Albanian Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of the Interior signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the OSCE Presence on promoting the CC in cooperation with GTZ Albania, UNICEF Albania, and EDEM/ USAID³. The MoU

paved the way for establishing a Monitoring Board of Ethics in Tourism to assist in the organization of training sessions for potential CC signatories and production of awareness-raising and training material. A unique and substantive component of the Code implementation in Albania has been the ability to recognize the value of the CC in the national legislation regulating the tourism industry. Twenty two tour and hotel operators signed the CC during the signing ceremony in November 2007. The signing was accompanied by a national awareness campaign and the preparation of training material.

³ United States Agency for International Development

A key element of the project was the move towards institutional development, which included the provision of technical support to the Ministry of Tourism and the establishment of a Monitoring Committee in each country to strengthen capacity in the areas of action plan development, strategic planning and implementation. The support of government clearly strengthened the political awareness of the issue of sexual exploitation of minors in tourism as well as facilitated first steps towards inter-ministerial co-operation and increased commitment on the side of the private industry.