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**Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in Cyprus**

# Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in Cyprus: Social Policies and Social Work Practice

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# Abstract

This study has used qualitative methods to examine social work practices and social policy regarding the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus. In-depth interviews were conducted with victims of trafficking and key stakeholders, from government and non-government services, aiming to examine the perceptions of both groups of participants and to examine the weaknesses and strengths of the government of Cyprus' system for tackling trafficking and protecting the victims. It aims to inform the government about ways in which policies and practices can improve. The study adopted a constructivist approach and reflexivity was utilised to interpret the data in order to mitigate any ethical pitfalls. The main finding of this study is that the government of Cyprus has not adequately addressed weaknesses in policy and practice in regard to tackling trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and protection of victims. Although legislation and policy appear to be adequate, there are failures in implementation. The victims' needs are also not met effectively, especially after their court case is over. The failure of the government to implement its stated policy is found, according to the participants, to result from the lack of political will to change, which is due to preconceptions and biases towards gender equality, racism and xenophobia. In addition, social work practices which specialise in the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation are scarce and there is no indication from the government that this is going to change in the near future. Furthermore, the study finds that the government of Cyprus needs to focus more on prevention measures and interventions which could address discrimination issues amongst the young population and to implement more up-to-date tools for better collaboration and coordination amongst the services involved in tackling trafficking and protecting the victims.

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# Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:                                DATE:  15 September 2017

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# Abbreviations

CST – Cyprus Stop Trafficking

HT – Human Trafficking

MCG – Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group

MIGS – Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

NAP – National Action Plan

NRM – National Referral Mechanism

SWS – Social Welfare Services

THB – Trafficking in Human Beings

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus and the research problem

Cyprus is an island located in the Mediterranean Sea between three continents – Africa, Europe and Asia. It has been a member of the European Union since 2008. Due to its geographical location, Cyprus is a transit and a destination country for traffickers and their victims. The Mediterranean Sea and the northern side of Cyprus, which is occupied and recognised only by Turkey, is a portal for irregular migrants and victims of trafficking. According to the TIP Report (2016; 2017), in 2015 the people identified by the government of Cyprus as having been trafficked, originated from India, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Romania, Philippines, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Slovakia, and Czech Republic. A few more countries were added in 2016: Latvia, Dominican Republic, China, Turkey, Togo and Paraguay.

The two main types of trafficking that are identified in Cyprus are sexual exploitation and forced labour of adults. However, according to the [1]Trafficking in Persons' (TIP) report (2017) and the Group of Experts against Trafficking in Human Beings' (GRETA) report (2015), the identified victims of forced labour were more than the victims of sexual exploitation. In 2014, there were 19 identified victims of sexual exploitation and 22 of forced labour. All the victims of sexual exploitation were women whereas 16 out of the 22 victims of forced labour were men. Cyprus is a small island with a population of less than a million and although the numbers of identified victims might seem comparatively small, it does not mean that THB should not be a top priority of the Cyprus authorities. The government of Cyprus and generally the civil society only started addressing the

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[1] The Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) from the Department of State (USA) and GRETA Report from the EU Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings are the main reports drafted on an EU and international level regarding THB.

trafficking issue more rigorously in 2007, after being under scrutiny, for a few years, by the EU, for failing to protect a victim who died in 2001. In 2007, the government finally drew an exclusive legislation regarding THB (Law 87(I)/2007). Since then, the legislation has been reformed twice in 2012 and 2014 by adopting a more human rights and victim protection's approach.

Furthermore, the government of Cyprus has signed the 'UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children' and the 'Directive 2011/36/EU on prevention and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims'. All the countries that have signed the aforesaid, are encouraged by the pertinent bodies (Council of Europe, the European Commission, the United Nations Department of State of the USA) to draw strong and rigorous policies and legislations and to report to the TIP report every year and to GRETA whenever it is requested. Moreover, the government of Cyprus has adopted the UN Protocol's (otherwise known as 'Palermo Protocol') definition of THB, which is internationally accepted as a common definition, and has included it in its legislation and policies and ratified most of the EU and international treaties and conventions on THB. In addition, it has created a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to help services and NGOs involved in tackling THB to better coordinate the collaboration amongst them and to better support the victims. The government has also appointed the Ministry of Interior to coordinate all the actions to tackle THB and to draw the National Action Plans through the formation of a Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) which consists of all the ministries, services and four NGOs that are involved in combating THB.

However, even though the government of Cyprus has affiliated with most of the EU and international bodies, directives and policies, it lacks relevant social policies and effective social work practice implementation. According to the TIP reports over the years (since 2004 when Cyprus started taking part), the government of Cyprus has been placed in tiers which indicates

that it does not fully meet the minimal standards required to eliminate THB. Therefore, the government's efforts to address the internationally accepted '4 Ps' paradigm (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnerships) which are outlined in both the United Nations' Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), have not been effective. In addition, the National Action Plans that are drafted by the MCG every three years, have poor implementation and most of the actions are repetitive and ineffective. According to the TIP reports (2010 – 2017), from 2009 - 2016, 132 people were identified by the government as having been trafficked (they were all women) and out of 173 cases investigated by the police, only 74 traffickers were convicted with minor penalties. Furthermore, the reformed legislation of 2014 (L. 60(I)/2014) criminalises the demand for sex services but no buyer has been convicted so far. Moreover, even though the government provides the victims with a shelter for a short period, financial aid and a year residency permit with the right of renewal, no other support is provided to them. In addition, social work practice specialised in trafficking of women for sexual exploitation does not exist in Cyprus. The social workers that meet with the victims are employed by the Social Welfare Services and their responsibilities, according to the NRM, are limited to escorting and assisting them to connect with other services.

## 1.2    Research aims and questions

This study aims to examine: the Cyprus government's efforts to tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and to protect the women who have been identified as having been trafficked, in regards to policies and social work practices in Cyprus; how the government of Cyprus, the NGOs and the women identified as having been trafficked perceive the strengths and limitations of the policies and practices, and to provide information on how to improve policies and social work practices. There has been little empirical research on THB in Cyprus and there has been none addressing the victims' needs and experiences of the 'support system' in Cyprus.

This study is unique because: (a) it is the first empirical research on social policies and social work practices concerning trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus which means it fills a gap in the literature; and (b) it includes both victims of trafficking and key stakeholders to examine the existing social policies and social work practice in Cyprus. It also adds to the minimal literature that already exists in Cyprus as far as THB is concerned and its findings have shed light on where the government of Cyprus can focus on to be able to tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation more efficiently. Furthermore, it contributes to social work theory, specifically on how it can be implemented and on which levels and at which levels in practice to improve the delivery of service to women that have been trafficked. (Unfortunately, empirical studies on social work practices in regard to THB are meagre). In addition, it contributes to a better understanding of the experiences of women who have been trafficked which could lead to a positive change of official attitudes towards them.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- Has trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus been adequately addressed in social policy and social work practice?

    - What are the limitations and strengths of social policies and social work practices in Cyprus?
    - Are the needs of victims of trafficking being met in Cyprus?

- How is trafficking of women for sexual exploitation perceived by the government, NGOs and victims?

    - Does the government of Cyprus identify and accept the policy and social work practice limitations and strengths?
    - How do the various government services and NGOs in Cyprus perceive their role and responsibilities in tackling trafficking and protecting the victims?

- Do the victims of trafficking understand their situation and do they feel they are supported effectively by the government of Cyprus?

- How can the government of Cyprus improve its efforts to tackle trafficking in women for sexual exploitation and protect the victims?

  - Is the government of Cyprus capable of taking action and addressing the policy and social work practice limitations?
  - Are there any impediments that could hinder the government's efforts?
  - Are there any good practices in other countries that could be implemented in Cyprus to tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and support the victims?

## 1.3   Overview of the methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this study for a more in-depth understanding of the context of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and "to elucidate the nature of social practices, relationships, and beliefs along with the meaning of human experiences from the participants' point of view" (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The researcher posits a social constructivist philosophical approach to the research to enhance the choice of qualitative methods and to explore the way the participants of this study socially manufacture and construct their understanding of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation through their interactions and communication with the civil society, political apparatus and cultural infrastructures.

Interviews were conducted with seven women identified as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation and with ten key stakeholders from five state services and five NGOs which are the main services dealing with all matters in regard to THB in Cyprus. The interviews were semi-structured and took place in the participants' own choice of venue. All participants

were informed prior to the interviews for the purpose of the study and a consent form was signed by all. Moreover, narrative and thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the data from the interviews.

The researcher took into consideration a few ethical issues concerning reflexivity. As a Cypriot woman and a social worker who has had 16 years of work experience in Cyprus, in both state and private sectors, she had to consider her own assumptions and preconceptions about the way the Cyprus authorities and system operates and the cultural issues regarding gender inequality, racism and xenophobia in Cyprus. Therefore, the researcher had to be very cautious during the interviews with both participants' categories to not reflect her own perceptions and opinions and in addition to keep a very rigorous stance while analysing and interpreting the findings of this study.

## 1.4    Overview of the study's findings

The government of Cyprus, according to this study, is not adequate nor effective in addressing trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in social policy and social work practice because of poor implementation due to weaknesses in the legislation and lack of political volition to address the weaknesses of the system and change it. It is found that, the lack of volition stems from racist and xenophobic attitudes from the policy makers but also from gender bias and preconceptions. Both categories of participants (women identified as having been trafficked and key stakeholders) perceive trafficking of women for sexual exploitation as a very serious issue in Cyprus and they believe that the 'support system' is weak because it lacks in support programmes for the victims that would aim in empowering them as women and as citizens of the Cypriot society. Both categories think that the government is just scratching the surface regarding its efforts to tackle the issue on a policy level and both have highlighted the absence of social work practice mainly by the government; the NGOs were very strong on this point.

## 1.5    Thesis outline

The thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter one introduces the issue under research and its background, an overview of the methodology and findings, and outlines the structure of the rest of the chapters. Chapter two explores the THB in general by giving a more general presentation of the term of trafficking and its history and then it focuses more on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Europe and the USA. Chapter three reviews the situation of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus, its policies and social work practices. Chapter four focuses on the relevant social policies and social work practices in the EU and USA and it presents some good practices. Chapter five discusses the methodology of the study, including its philosophical stance, theoretical paradigms, ethical issues, strengths and weaknesses. Chapter six presents the findings from the interviews with the women (participants) that were identified as being trafficked and depicts their trafficking experience and their experience of the 'helping system' in Cyprus. Chapter seven presents the findings from the interviews with the key stakeholders, concerning their own personal perceptions on trafficking of women in Cyprus and their organisation's political position on the matter. Chapter eight discusses and argues for the need of more comprehensive, coherent and responsive policies and social work practices in Cyprus. Lastly, chapter nine concludes on the study's findings and its limitations, contributions and recommendations for further research.

# CHAPTER 2: THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PHENOMENON WITH A FOCUS ON TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the various interpretations, perceptions and theories of THB and trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. It begins by explaining the meaning of the word 'trafficking', as used in official discourse, and then it carries on giving a summary of its history which is knowledge one can gain in order to understand what it is and where it comes from, and to contextualise the current debates on it. It then elaborates on the definition of the Palermo Protocol of 2000 and its weaknesses despite it being the only definition that is used internationally. Furthermore, the various types of trafficking are presented, in order to conceptualise trafficking in all its forms, concluding on the one type which this chapter will focus on – sex trafficking.

It is important to take under consideration both the process of trafficking and its consequences for the victims in order to form a more substantial idea of it. Both are explored describing the phenomenon of trafficking by utilising the different views of various researchers. This chapter concludes by presenting the prevalent theories of trafficking, denoting the various reasons for the existence and prevalence of trafficking, such as matters of power, gender inequality, social injustice, prostitution tolerance, political / financial interests and increase of demand.

All the available data on THB are influenced by the social interpretation of its meaning. Hence, such data are formed by researchers' interpretation of what THB is, which is influenced by their own professional knowledge and experience of the world. Therefore, it should be clear that this chapter, and

generally this study, is the researcher's understanding of what trafficking is, informed by her own scientific research.

Moreover, it should be noted that the references used in this chapter, and the whole thesis, derive from academic research studies and official reports from government bodies. The usage of documents obtained from state sources were rigorously assessed for their credibility and up-to-date representativeness. The lack of such assessment could lead to false and unreliable results to the researcher's work. In addition, the data presented by government bodies in this study (such as TIP, UNHCR, GRETA reports) may be either exaggerated or understated regarding the extent of THB. Even though the various governments have legal and administrative systems to generate the data, it is not quite clear how the systems are applied in each country; moreover, in some countries the data are collected by non-government bodies. Therefore, the information provided by these bodies might not portray the true extent of the trafficking phenomenon around the globe. Nonetheless, the value of such documents is great since actions and legislations are formed to tackle THB based on them.

Lastly, even though this chapter includes definitions of human trafficking in general, the focus of the chapter, and of the thesis, is trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. The specific type of trafficking was chosen by the researcher because there is little empirical data available for it in Cyprus and because in comparison to other forms of trafficking, or trafficking of men and young boys, it is the most dominant (Hodge & Leitz, 2007).

## 2.2    A review of the trafficking phenomenon

In order to be able to comprehend what human trafficking is, this segment will include, firstly, the meaning of the word 'trafficking' so it is clear as to where it comes from and what it means. Then, it will delineate its history (including definitions and their strengths/weaknesses) which is important to understand its evolution as a social phenomenon. Furthermore, the areas

and process of trafficking will be presented as well as the characteristics of vulnerable populations who are at high risk of being trafficked and the consequences trafficking has on them. Lastly, traffickers' profiles and modus operandi will be described.

### 2.2.1 'Human trafficking' – definitions (strengths and weaknesses)

The word 'trafficking' means: "to deal or trade in something illegal" (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/traffic?q=trafficking#traffic__9). According to Salt and Stein (1997) 'to traffic' "means "to carry on trade, trade, buy and sell, have commercial dealings with any one, bargain or deal for a commodity" (p. 470). Human trafficking is the actual trading and passing of persons from one person to the other for the exchange of money which portrays the ability of some to exploit others. The transfer of people can be done nationally or internationally aiming for a higher and more lucrative purpose. According to O' Connell Davidson and Anderson (2006), "the supposed value of the concept of 'trafficking' is that it can grasp situations in which abuse and exploitation at the point of destination are linked to the use of force or deception within the emigration process" (p. 11).

In accordance to the above explanation, trafficking depicts a covert purpose that entails violence through coercion and exploitation of the subjects at hand. It also includes a process that involves vulnerable people who can become victims and manipulative persons that hold the power to exploit them. Consequently, trafficking is a multidimensional concept and holds various facets that heighten difficulties to the various governments that want to tackle it. In addition, the understanding and conceptualisation of trafficking for each person or party who is involved in it varies. It is, therefore, very difficult to define trafficking because it is "a term used to refer to a number of practices and consequences rather than a single, unitary act leading to one specific outcome" (Melrose and Barrett, 2006, p. 113). However, because of its multidimensional features, the need for a common definition that could be used internationally was identified by the

various EU states. Hence, this common definition of human trafficking was enacted and formed by the Palermo Protocol of 2000.

The Palermo Protocol of 2000 set out the first definition to include various sectors of trafficking and all human beings (Van Den Anker and Doomernik, 2006). The Palermo Protocol was signed by 80 countries (this reached [2]117 in 2016), and was included in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2000 (Van Den Anker and Doomernik, 2006). The definition is stated in Article 3(a) of the UN Protocol and refers to trafficking as:

> The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nations, 2000, p. 2).

The UN Protocol's definition is considered a pioneer to all other definitions since it refers to all human beings and not just women and girls and to other forms of exploitation besides exploitation for prostitution such as exploitation in the labour market, conditions of slavery or servitude and the removal and selling of human organs. It was adopted by many countries because it covered three very important areas of trafficking where other definitions had not and these are: the 'criminal act' which includes the recruitment, transportation and harbouring of persons; the 'means used' to commit the criminal acts such as "threats or use of force, coercion,

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[2] Gleaned from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's website. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/signatures.html> [Accessed 1 August 2017].

abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim"; and the goals for which one traffics, for example sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and even the removal of organs" (Van Liempt, 2006, pp. 30-31).

However, even the most recent and most used definition has several weaknesses that do not help the combating of trafficking nationally or internationally. According to O'Connell Davidson and Anderson (2006), trafficking is a process that includes recruiting, transporting and controlling persons and there are several ways and actions that can be taken in doing that, in order to create various outcomes, hence the definition cannot be implemented in a uniformed way.

The phrase 'exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation' is ambiguous since none of the concepts within that phrase are explained in the protocol. For this reason, it is at each country's own discretion how those meanings are interpreted according to their culture and domestic laws. Trafficking in terms of prostitution or not is also ambiguous (O'Connell Davidson and Anderson, 2006). In addition, the protocol fails to portray meanings of words such as 'exploitation', 'coercion', and 'vulnerability' and that causes problems for those that are interested and concerned for people who are trafficked into other sectors of trafficking besides the sex industry (ibid; Sullivan, 2003).

The protocol does not specify how the degree of exploitation is measured but it does make clear that it is exploitation that makes the difference in trafficking. But how much exploitation it takes for it to be considered as trafficking, is unclear (Van Liempt, 2006). Therefore, "without a neutral measure of 'exploitation', it is ... unclear how 'trafficking' is to be distinguished from the legal movement of women and children into household, for instance, through marriage, adoption or fostering" (O'Connell Davidson & Anderson, 2006, p. 17). The degree of exploitation should be

defined for the different categories of exploitation to be comprehensible to all nations. But as Sullivan (2003) argues, the protocol is not clear on the definition of 'sexual exploitation' or 'exploitation of the prostitution of others' because a mutual agreement could not be achieved hence the protocol will not be able to be applied adequately by nations worldwide.

Sullivan (2003) also argues about the rights and protection of victims of trafficking and how the protocol fails to use a clear wording. It says that "trafficking victims are entitled, 'to the extent possible' and 'in appropriate cases', to legal compensation, medical treatment, housing, legal advice, counselling, educational and training opportunities" denoting that victims may not be eligible for all the aforementioned if they do not testify against their trafficker for example (Sullivan, 2003, p. 84).

Even though the protocol has managed to raise international consciousness about the problems of trafficking and has started focusing on the victims as well and not just the perpetrators, unfortunately it is not sufficient and results in the arrest, imprisonment and immediate deportation of most of the victims of trafficking (Sullivan, 2003). It is argued, in both scholarly and policy discussions of human trafficking, that "virtually any illegal migration for the purpose of obtaining work, and especially migration leading to prostitution, is trafficking — irrespective of whether the individual consented or was aware of the type and conditions of work at the destination" (Weitzer, 2014, p. 7).

The lack of clarity on various issues in regards to the context of the Protocol's definition and the lack of agreements amongst the countries utilising the definition could cause a lot of implications to the international efforts to tackle HT. The collaboration among the countries in an effort, for example, to prosecute the traffickers could be hindered due to inconsistencies in their policies which are based on the countries interpretation of the Protocol definition. Furthermore, these inconsistencies amongst the countries' policies could place people being trafficked at a

greater risk upon their return home, if their origin country has different policies regarding the protection of victims of trafficking to their destination country. Therefore, there could be a very high chance of re-victimisation.

### 2.2.2 The history of trafficking

Trafficking, and particularly trafficking for sexual exploitation, has existed for a long time but it only recently became a problem concerning policies and an international concern. Around the beginning of the 20th century, only voluntary associations tried to present trafficking as a problem and tried to tackle it through the creation of national and international mechanisms (Cree, 2008). One of those associations was the National Vigilance Association (NVA) that was launched in London in 1885 and tried to eradicate immorality and prostitution at a local, national and international scale. It organised campaigns, tried to remove women and girls from brothels, tipped the police off, tried to change the legislations criminalising incest in 1908, convicted men who procured or lived off the earnings of prostitutes and even organised international congresses and European conferences (ibid). The NVA came to its end in 1971 because of financial difficulties and because gradually it was taken over by other agencies (police, social work agencies etc) (ibid). However, Cree (2008) states that the legacy of National Vigilance Association's work will carry on affecting social work throughout time.

Social, political and economic changes have been observed since 1989 to existing European structures (Melrose and Barrett, 2006). Globalisation, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, unemployment, poverty and deprivation have led millions of people to migrate, therefore placing them in a vulnerable position to be trafficked (ibid). When communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, 21.5 million people migrated 50% of which were women and it was estimated that at least 4% of all migrants were trafficked (ibid).

Following this flow of migrants, Europe took strict measures concerning its borders that made them impermeable to the developing countries and

especially to the former Eastern European countries (Melrose and Barrett, 2006). Unfortunately, according to Merlose and Barrett (2006), these strict European migration legislations did not solve the problem of refugees but on the contrary, facilitated trafficking in human beings, which meant that people who sought to escape from horrible situations such as wars, torture or dire poverty, escaped using illegal and dangerous ways.

However, in order for the political, legal, social and economic systems of a country to react appropriately, the understanding of important definitions of concepts is imperative. Trafficking was at first referred to "traffic of women" which was linked to white slave trade (Pickup, 1998). In 1904, there was an International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave which targeted the tackling of women and girls' compulsion for immoral purposes abroad (ibid).

Later on, in 1949, the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others stated, "prostitution is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person'" (Pickup, 1998, p. 45). Punishment was forced upon any person that sought gratification from another person for purposes of prostitution even if the other person consented to it (Pickup, 1998).

According to Pickup (1998) the Convention prosecuted all acts of trafficking and prostitution hence its philosophy hinges on abolishing both, ignoring though the fact that some individuals are in need of work therefore it is their choice to migrate and enter prostitution. In the 1980s, trafficking was heightened again because of a fear of AIDS and of various feminist research on sexual exploitation which opened the debate whether prostitution is against all human rights or just another form of work therefore giving women the choice and right to do it and call themselves 'sex workers' (Pickup, 1998).

The European Parliament, in 1989, condemned prostitution and trafficking

for prostitution by adopting its first resolution on the exploitation of prostitution and the trafficking in human beings (Van Liempt, 2006). In 1996, a second resolution was adopted but this time the focus was more on migration because of an increase in the conception of trafficking as an issue of illegal or irregular movement (ibid). At that point, a lot of migrants, even though they had entered the country of destination temporarily, would still be considered illegal hence there was a big confusion with the migrants' status (ibid). But nevertheless, it was through this resolution that trafficking was "… brought into line with migration laws [and] went beyond the female-oriented concept of trafficking and adopted the term 'trafficking in human beings'" (Van Liempt, 2006, p. 29).

Gallagher (2006) reported that "in 1998, the UN General Assembly established the inter-governmental Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Crime to develop an international regime to address Transnational organised crime" (p. 154). In 2000, the Committee drafted the 'Convention against Transnational Crime and the Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking Protocols' (Gallagher, 2006). However, Gallagher (2006) stated that the Trafficking Protocol did not protect or preserve the human rights of the victims; it did not include the right for the victims to stay in the country of destination because the governments feared the increase of illegal immigration.

While the UN General Assembly was establishing the Ad Hoc Committee in 1998, the European Commission proposed to broaden the definition of trafficking so that it would include not only men but also women who are trafficked for purposes other than prostitution (e.g. domestic workers, forced marriages) (Van Liempt, 2006). Unfortunately, the definition was ambiguous and resulted in organisations adopting their own definitions, until the creation and international adaptation of the Palermo Protocol definition in 2000 (see point 2.1.), which includes all human beings and other forms of exploitation not just for prostitution (Van Liempt, 2006).

### 2.2.3 Types of trafficking

Trafficking, as it is previously mentioned, concerns an action that involves coercion and impingement of human rights and forces an unwanted change of someone's life imposing inadmissible consequences on them. It can include people of any age, gender and nationality and it can involve different types of labour exploitation (such as domestic servitude slavery, factory slavery, farm slavery, begging, forced marriage), sexual exploitation (such as commercial sexual exploitation of girls and women through prostitution, commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism), or other forms (such as child soldier slavery, removal and selling of organs and any other type of exploitation that a human mind can think of) (Worldwide Documentaries, 2008).

Research indicates that trafficking for labour exploitation includes both female and male in sectors such as agriculture and horticulture, construction, cleaning, the textile industry, nursing and care work, domestic work, hospitality services, illicit activities, in forced marriages working for relatives and in forced crime involvement (Dowling et. al., 2007; Coster van Voorhout, 2007). However, according to Dowling et. al. (2007), what differentiates the type of work people are forced into, is gender and nationality. Thus, women and girls are more likely to work in cleaning and care work and men and boys in the construction industry (ibid). Unfortunately, for some people forced labour can be confused with poor work conditions since work back home was even worse, a situation which opens the door to trafficking (Jahic and Finckenauer, 2005). In this case, could these people be considered as trafficked? Is trafficking a matter of consent? The issue of consent has troubled a lot of researchers and policy-makers and even in the Palermo Protocol it is mentioned but not defined clearly because the consent concerns sexual exploitation as well which is the predominant of all types of trafficking. According to Dowling et.al (2007), there is not a lot of in-depth research into specific sectors of employment besides domestic service that are associated with trafficking for labour exploitation.

Through the various studies under scrutiny, trafficking for sexual exploitation appears to be the most researched and is associated mostly with prostitution. It is based on the history of trafficking which started from 1904 until 1996 with the belief that trafficking was only associated with white slavery and prostitution. After 1996 and with the evolution of feminism, it turned into a debate which is focused basically on the extent to which it is a free choice to work as a prostitute, to work in other sectors at risk of trafficking, or to just migrate (Garofalo, 2006). The answer to that assumes a separation between 'voluntary prostitution', 'free labour' and 'voluntary migration' on the one hand and 'forced prostitution', 'slavery' or 'trafficking' on the other (ibid).

According to Eurostat (2014) sex trafficking is highly gender-biased since most research reports state that women and girls are more frequently trafficked for sexual exploitation than men and men mostly act as the perpetrators. There is a continuum of positions where some have the tendency to view prostitution and sexual exploitation as the same implying that all women who work in the sex industry are exploited and trafficked and others believe that women have the right to choose their profession and concomitantly they are not thought to be exploited (Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005; Kelly, 2003). Radical feminists support the criminalisation of prostitution because it downgrades women's position and self where sex work feminists consider the sex work to be a woman's right and choice of profession – they have even formed sex work unions to fight for their rights (e.g. the UK based International Union of Sex Workers or the Exotic Dancers Alliance in the USA) (Sullivan, 2003; Kelly, 2003; Doezema, 2005). So, if women were trafficked into prostitution but gradually, because of circumstances, have come to accept their situation and know no other way of surviving, are they still considered to be victims of trafficking? Again, the issue of consent, as previously mentioned, is ambiguous. The degree of exploitation and whether women in the sex industry give their consent is a continuum which so far has not been explored much. When does someone

feel exploited and who is to state that?

Trafficking for the removal of organs has not been researched much however OSCE (2013) states, through many journalists and medical anthropologists' documentations, that the demand for organs has increased in the last fifteen years. It was reported that the victim-donors come from very dire situations and they will sell their organs for much less than the traffickers will sell them to their rich clientele (ibid). Hence, the OSCE (2013) denotes that it has become a global phenomenon involving both developed and developing countries. There are a lot of ethical considerations that involve people's consent hoping to get rewarded; people being forced into it; and how and what happens to them afterwards. According to Scheper-Hughes (2000), this type of trafficking has no discrimination on who the victims will be; they could be male or female, black or white, children or adults. She mentions India and China to be the two places where most organs are stolen or bought from.

Finally, trafficking can be viewed as irregular migration. More specifically it is referred to as an attempt at irregular migration which failed and resulted in abuse, exploitation and slavery (Jahic and Finckenauer, 2005). Trafficking does not always include smuggling people across the borders, but illegal migration indicates irregular movement of people which opens the way to various networks of transnational criminals (ibid). Van den Anker (2006) denotes "trafficking requires the continued exercise of control over migrants once they have moved, while the role of the smuggler is simply to facilitate border crossing" in other words in trafficking there are victims involved and in smuggling there are not (p. 19).

### 2.2.4 The process of trafficking of women

Trafficking has been understood by Melrose & Barrett (2006) as a process which entails several phases and various activities that are well planned and therefore it is not easy to understand or detect. It can be very complex involving various social actors making an aggregative effort to create a worldwide illegal network. In addition, globalisation and more importantly

"the entry in 2004 of ten new countries into the European Union, and in 2007 of a further two, Bulgaria and Romania which are typically countries of origin for sex trafficking, has meant that the job of trafficking has become easier for traffickers" (Goodey, 2008, p. 427).

Furthermore, according to Hodge (2008), human trafficking is considered to be the fastest growing element of organised crime which entails coercion of people in various forms including intimidation. The German Federal Crime Intelligence Office defines organised crime as: "the planned violation of the law for profit or to acquire power, which offences are each, or together, of major significance, and are carried out by more than two participants who cooperate within a division of labour for a long or undetermined time-span using; (a) commercial or commercial like structures, (b) violence or other means of intimidations or (c) influence on politics, media, public administration, justice, and legitimate economy" (Surtees, 2008, p. 45). In addition, Surtees (2008) states that trafficking could not expand its business without the help and involvement of officials that use their position in high ranking government or social places to sustain criminal ventures.

Moreover, research indicates that high profits and low risk actions enable existing crime syndicates and loosely organised groups to get involved in human trafficking by recruiting, transporting and pimping through complex and organised networks (Surtees, 2008). However, Surtees (2008) indicates that organised crime is involved more frequently in sexual trafficking because the selling of young women and girls is more profitable – they can be sold many times to different people and places providing the traffickers the majority of their revenue (ibid).

Criminal groups, for example in Russia, can be employed to provide protection and other services to the trafficking operations and sex business such as the recruiting, transporting and distributing of women (Pickup, 1998). Furthermore, there are illegal companies such as marriage / entertainment / employment agencies that manipulate and mislead women

and these companies are run by organised criminal groups (Pickup, 1998).

According to a Hungarian study by Juhasz in 1999, trafficking organisations "typically have a cellular and hierarchical structure, where executive units are left in the dark about a higher-level control that is well organised and difficult to penetrate" (Salt, 2000, p. 42). According to Salt (2000), these organisations were created by a group of individuals that collaborated and got involved in trafficking and then eventually developed international businesses that were no longer coordinated by Hungary. Another study carried out in Poland agreed on the hierarchical construction of organisations where at the top there is a leader who controls the entire route of trafficking and its security (Salt, 2000). As any other organisation that functions as a business, it is inevitably expected that organised criminal groups "will merge or takeover, with small, non-powerful organisations being absorbed or pushed aside by bigger ones. The latter will then divide up the market, perhaps on the basis of cultural, historical or ethnic considerations" (Salt, 2000, p. 43).

Trafficking, according to the aforementioned researchers, is perceived as a crime which is illegal and in all nations perpetrators are punished with imprisonment. Thus, this type of crime, and as any crime for that matter, needs to be well organised in order to make no mistakes and evade the punishment. It involves a lot of actors in many countries and requires a precise and perfect plan which makes it harder for governments to uncover the system.

To be more precise about the actual process of trafficking which is used by organised groups, Melrose and Barrett (2006) denote that there are three stages that portray trafficking: "recruitment, transportation and control in the country of destination" (p. 116).

*Recruitment* of victims according to Hodge (2008), could happen through three different approaches: false-front agencies, local sex industries and

abduction. Companies, such as employment, marriage or modelling ones, work under illegal pretence and mislead people, and especially women and young girls, deceiving them into believing that they are giving them an opportunity to a better quality of life and a more profitable one. Unfortunately, people, because of their vulnerable financial or family situation, fall into the trap of believing the agents and entrusting them with their official documentation such as passport in order to sort out their transportation to another country. This mostly means that 'victims' also are deceived into believing that they are going to pay off their debt of all transportation expenses as soon as they start working but this debt, the so called 'debt bondage', is what makes them susceptible to trafficking since the debt only grows bigger afterwards (Hodge, 2008, p. 145). Therefore, as Van Liempt (2006) assumes, if debt is taken away from them then they stop being vulnerable hence they cannot be exploited.

Moreover, as research indicates, a way of recruiting people, specifically women, for sexual exploitation is to approach women that are already in the prostitution business and promise them much higher earnings in a wealthier country (Hodge, 2008). Even though these women already know the nature of the work, they do not know the 'slave-like conditions' they will be working in (Hodge, 2008, p. 146). Another way of trafficking persons is by abducting them. According to Hodge (2008), usually the easiest people to kidnap are the ones that are already in the sex business and do not want to leave their country but also other people who just lack social ties.

Advertisements in newspapers, or through the internet, which offer lucrative job opportunities to foreign countries without having much expectation of skills (waitresses and nannies) is a common method that traffickers use according to Hughes (2000). In addition, Hughes (2000) notes that another method of recruiting is through a friend or acquaintance that gains a woman's trust but a more shocking method is the so called 'second wave' in which victims of trafficking return home to recruit other victims for trafficking.

*Transportation*, as it was previously mentioned, is done through either false documentations or with 'artist visas' or 'work visas'. Usually, according to Hughes (2000), this implies corruption of officials through bribes or collaboration of officials in criminal networks. Another way of transporting people, which does not necessarily mean that they will be trafficked, is smuggling them into other countries. People may voluntarily go to other countries because of their own choice of finding a better life but their trip to freedom can turn into a trip in the worst slave-like life.

Research indicates that traffickers, as previously mentioned, confiscate victims' personal belongings (such as passports, identities, etc) and force them into a 'debt-bondage' beginning from travelling expenses they cannot afford in order to control their 'commodities' (Hodge and Leitz, 2007). Furthermore, victims are threatened, deceived or even, in some cases, mutilated and murdered as warnings and as punishment to others who refuse to engage in either prostitution or anything that trafficked people usually do not want to do (Hughes, 2000).

### 2.2.5  Sex trafficking and risk factors

There are some risk factors that indicate populations vulnerable to exploitation and sex trafficking. The populations that are considered vulnerable and at high risk of being trafficked consist of poor people, people with poor family relationships, broken homes, abuse and neglect within the home, people that are mentally disabled or have parents with a substance abuse problem, children that have left home, or even children who live on the streets. Furthermore, they could be women and children who have left their homes because they were physically or sexually abused by parents, husbands or relatives. For example, "in Latin America, researchers link the growth of street child prostitution not only to poverty and urbanisation but also to widespread violence against women and girls suffering continued male incest at home" (Roby, 2005, p. 139). In the US "between 450,000 and 2.8 million children and youths run away or are thrown out of home every year and significant numbers of them will be commercially sexually

exploited" (Kortla, 2010, p. 183).

Research shows that traffickers usually take advantage of poor, unemployed people, orphans and young children, women with physical disabilities, innumerate and illiterate people, people that are socially deprived and people that have a desire to emigrate in the search of a better life (Hughes, 2000; Hodge, 2008; Hodge and Lietz, 2007). In sum, they seek out individuals that are in very vulnerable situations. Some people, though, lack information about sex trade or trafficking in general and that makes them even more vulnerable and easy trusting especially when a friend or even a family member is already involved in the business of trafficking (ibid). Marek Okolski (2001) found that women, who are already in the sex profession, are the most vulnerable to trafficking (cited in Davydov, 2013). He states that these women come from troubled families and history (sex abuse, drug and alcohol problems), and have no education hence they are more vulnerable to deception (ibid). However, Mahmoud and Trebesch (2010), through their study, found that "it is the high rate of emigration that determines the populations' vulnerability to trafficking and involvement in sex trade abroad" (cited in Davydov, 2013, p. 235). They argue that what makes people vulnerable to trafficking is their desire for a better life abroad placing them in high risk situations (ibid).

The TIP Report (2016) pins down specific vulnerable groups that can fall into the hands of traffickers. These are migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, disabled people, stateless people, gay people and people from religious minorities. It is argued that migrants who flee war and unrest fall in the hands of smugglers who take advantage of their misfortune. A lot of them might not possess any identity documents making it easier for smugglers to manipulate them, for example by advising them to apply for asylum in the new country giving them time to "use" them while they are waiting for approval (ibid). Disabled people, who were abandoned by their families and are poor with no help from the government, are coerced by traffickers into street begging by using their disability to gain other people's

sympathy. Stateless people are also considered vulnerable to trafficking since they lack identity documents consequently having no access to education and economic opportunities (ibid). According to UNHCR, around 10 million people are stateless today and one-third of them are children (TIP Report, 2016). The lack of identity papers gives the employers the opportunity to coerce these people to debt bondage or other exploitative conditions (ibid). LGBTI people, who have been treated as outcasts by their families and society and are not self-sustained, can be manipulated and coerced into commercial sex acts by the traffickers. Women and girls are forced into marriage or prostitution, or domestic servitude since in certain countries forced marriage is permitted making them more prone to exploitation by traffickers.

However, referring solely to the aforementioned characteristics of vulnerable populations in high risk of being trafficked, oversimplifies the problem (Jahic and Finckenauer, 2005). In addition, it would be ideal if all those characteristics, presented by everyone, shaped the profile of a potential victim enabling the successful prevention of trafficking by helping those that are most vulnerable, (in high risk people) or if the process of trafficking was just like it was outlined in the previous section but unfortunately it is not quite as distinct. Even though many of the victims fit the profile, some others do not and even though the process may appear to have a specific pattern, it does not. According to research, there are university-educated victims who are not deceived into being trafficked since they do know what kind of work they are expected to do or that they will be entering another country illegally and as soon as they do, it is very difficult to track them down (Jahic and Finckenauer, 2005; Laczko, and Gramegna, 2003). Nevertheless, these people are still considered to be victims of trafficking.

Surtees (2008) states that the delineation of vulnerable populations at high risk of being trafficked, is not easy to establish and if that ever happens, then there is a risk of forcing the traffickers into shifting from the existing

traits to new traits of victims and that might cause an even greater harm, which indicates the wrong way to tackle trafficking. However, Surtees (2008) points out that if research is conducted based traffickers' behaviour and modus operandi, aiming to understand their methods, opportunities and circumstances of their actions, then trafficking can be reduced by anticipating their moves and operations, therefore, the appropriate laws or social and economic reforms can be shaped.

### 2.2.6 Consequences of trafficking for the victims

People who have been trafficked, as it is understood by researchers, can suffer from physical, sexual, psychological and social consequences. "Malnutrition, substance abuse, low academic attainment, are common, as are psychological and emotional consequences including low self-esteem, self-hate, feeling like an outcast, unworthy, unloved, unlovable and degraded, leading victims to enter into a series of other exploitative relationships" (Roby, 2005, p. 140). Victims of trafficking appear at many times to feel that there is no hope and no help for them and sometimes they even give up thinking that there is no escape from their situation. But even if they do escape, for most people the experience of being trafficked stigmatises their life and their future. There are so many scars left that in some cases they find themselves back into the trafficking situation, especially the people that were either put into trafficking by their families in the first place, thus living through betrayal in the worst way, or people that have no other way of supporting themselves because they lack the education and the skill (Roby, 2005; Melrose and Barrett, 2006).

As it seems, women and girls who were trafficked in prostitution and have run away from it would sometimes be labelled by the society as 'common prostitutes' increasing the risk of them going back into prostitution and into the trafficking situation. The power of the society can cripple a victim of trafficking who may have managed to come out of it. Moreover, according to Roby (2005), governments may be cruel to these victims arresting and imprisoning them for being in a foreign country with an illegal status and for

being involved in illegal activities. Therefore, as Melrose & Barrett (2006) found, many of the young girls are afraid to go to the police to ask for help because of either the vulnerability of their immigration status or because they think they will not help them since "their views of the criminal justice system are often tainted by experiences of corruption that they may previously have encountered and generally because of their experiences at the hands of adults, these children and young girls find it difficult to trust anyone" (p. 119).

Many women who have been identified as having been trafficked are traumatised and according to Roby (2005) most of them return to their home towns having no skills or abilities or the strength to do anything. As a result they are stigmatised by society and left with sometimes no other choice than to go back to the trafficking state, a situation they are familiar with (Roby, 2005).

Even though the social and psychological trauma related to trafficking has been well observed and documented, the health consequences on the other hand have been greatly neglected (Muftic and Finn, 2013). Muftic and Finn (2013) conducted the first study which researched the impact of risk factors of health outcomes on women trafficked for sex in the United States; both domestic and international victims. They revealed that most of the victims (participants) have been violently victimised throughout their lifetime (e.g. threatened with a weapon, physically assaulted, raped or sexually abused, restricted freedom of movement) (Muftic and Finn, 2013). They also found that there are some differences between the experiences in the sex work of domestic and international victims of trafficking – domestic victims of trafficking appeared to have poorer health outcomes from their experiences. Poor physical health was found to be related to childhood physical/sexual victimisation and women who were involved in street prostitution had more sexual health problems and addictions than any other (Muftic and Finn, 2013). Furthermore, various researchers, who considered the health issues of victims of trafficking, report that women who were

sexually exploited displayed higher levels of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (Farley et al., 2003; Tsutsumi et al., 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2008). In addition, the majority of the victims reported that they experienced back pain, memory difficulty, headaches, fatigue, stomach pain, pelvic pain and gynaecological infection (Zimmerman, 2008). Sexually transmitted diseases were also reported, with HIV/AIDS dominating (Muftic and Finn, 20013).

Although, the consequences of women who have been identified as having been trafficked have been identified in a few studies (as mentioned above), the researcher of this study found only one empirical study (it is presented in chapter 4) on the women's needs and experiences regarding the services they received after they were rescued or the consequences of their trafficking experience on their life thereafter, that is, their future. Hence, the importance of the study at hand is significant since it addresses both issues.

### 2.2.7  Traffickers' profile and modus operandi

Most data collected from NGOs and Intergovernmental Organisations (IGO), were centred mostly on victims and not as much on traffickers or recruiters, consequently there is not enough research on traffickers' profiles (Goodey, 2008).

Surtee found that recruiters are not always aware that they are trafficking people, they might think that they are just helping them find a better job (cited in Goddey, 2008). She suggests primary research through interviews with traffickers or a secondary analysis from court cases to be able to have a better understanding of who the traffickers are and why they choose to do what they do (ibid). The court cases "are rich sources of information about the recruitment process and the nature of exploitation, and also, provide details about traffickers' personal histories and the nature of trafficking networks" (ibid, 430). According to Surtee's study (2005, 2008), traffickers were not the typical 'male' perpetrators as most data would suggest but

rather female perpetrators who were as numerous as males in some countries (cited in Goddey, 2008).

However, UNODC (2014) conducted a research (as Surtee suggested above) using court cases from 64 countries and 5,747 offenders for the period 2010-2012 (or more recent) and has given a report on traffickers' profiles. The study found that 72 per cent of traffickers that were convicted are men and 28 per cent are women. The percentage of women offenders can be considered quite high but a possible explanation, that the study gives, is that women are involved in many roles and are more visible to law enforcement. They are used frequently for recruitment since they are women and can lure other women easier, gaining their trust with not much effort. Guards and money collectors are other roles that they take on hence getting in touch more frequently with the victims consequently making them more possible to be caught and arrested.

According to UNODC (2014), most of the traffickers (64 per cent) are citizens of the country where they are convicted. Therefore, even though traffickers move internationally, they also live and operate within their own country. However, there were 35 per cent of convicted traffickers who were foreigners in a convicted country which is a large number compared to the ten per cent of those convicted generally (ibid). These foreign traffickers tend to come from neighbourly countries (22 per cent) but there are also others that come from other regions (14 per cent). Traffickers could be involved in both domestic and cross-border trafficking activities, such as recruiting, transporting, exploiting or guarding victims (ibid). However, foreign traffickers are more likely to be involved in cross-border trafficking in persons in destination countries and not in origin countries (ibid).

The addition of 10 new countries in the EU and two more (Bulgaria and Romania) in 2007, made traffickers' jobs much easier since the travelling has become more affordable and less demanding (Goodey, 2008). Furthermore, with the evolution of technology, traffickers found more ways

of luring people into trafficking especially children who are more easy-trusting. The use of internet and chat rooms enables traffickers to manipulate children, to say the least, by pretending to be the ostensible online friend to them who gradually lures them into trafficking (Kortla, 2010).

## 2.3 Theories and their description on trafficking

Many researchers have tried to posit their own theory and understanding on what human trafficking is and why it is happening but they were faced with a phenomenon which is fraught with difficulties and complexities. Consequently, there are many theories and understandings of what HT is, and they all appear to have some reasonable arguments and valid grounds. They argue that the existence of trafficking in persons is affected by how society is built, by its culture and by the economic and political stances or perceptions of it. Furthermore, others have tried to link human trafficking with gender issues arguing that trafficking of women specifically for sex, exists because women are perceived by men but also by women as more vulnerable and weak hence more prone to be trafficked. In addition, human trafficking is seen as a profitable business since it is very lucrative and generates billions in income. Trafficking is also perceived as an organised crime which could take the form of overt or covert crime and making it even more difficult to unfold. Finally, human trafficking is also believed to be triggered by the economic status of each country. A more detailed description of researchers' realities and theoretical frameworks is delineated in the following points:

### 2.3.1 Trafficking as socially / culturally / economically / politically constructed

According to Hodge and Leitz (2007) "most commonly, victims of trafficking originate in Asia, the CIS, Africa, Eastern Europe, and, to a lesser extent, Latin America. The main transit regions are Eastern Europe, the industrialised nations, Asia, Africa, and, to a lesser extent, the CIS. The primary destinations are the industrialised nations. In descending order, the

most prominent destination countries are Italy, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, Greece, Turkey, and Thailand" (p. 165). According to the aforementioned, victims originate from poor countries and are sent to wealthy and industrialised ones; usually where prostitution is legal or tolerated (ibid).

This is a view which underpins the construction of trafficking by social and cultural practices that make trafficking extremely lucrative bringing to nations large incomes (Cree, 2008). The social and cultural construction of a country plays a very important role on traffickers and what kind of trafficking will take place. For example, in some countries it is believed that having sex with a virgin is considered to have restorative and healing powers (Roby, 2005). In addition, many countries criminalise the victims of sexual exploitation with laws that are very weak and vague (Roby, 2005). Moreover, trafficking appears to be very popular among single men, who come from developed countries but work in construction operations or military installations in under-developed countries therefore their opinion and respect for the indigenous women and children is inadmissible and inter alia they tend to seek younger girls because of a fear of AIDS (Roby, 2005). Therefore, trafficking is linked to the different cultural attitudes of people and their perspective on others who have a lower status than theirs.

According to Kortla (2010), Jamaica, the Netherlands, the United States, and Japan maintain a 'culture of tolerance' that helps the flourishing of sex trafficking markets. These markets are shaped by the history, language and the laws of each nation and they exist because of some level of tolerance within the community (ibid). Whether some behaviours are acceptable or not, depends on legislations, and social norms, the principles of religion and the degree of its practice. There is a culture of tolerance which is fuelled by the social and political norms which glamorise pimping and are embodied in the various daily life venues such as textiles, media, types of entertainment etc (Kortla, 2010).

Wheaton et al (2010) have tried to explain the economics of human trafficking giving their own understanding on how the "economic models are useful for the modelling of labour markets, and thus the market for human trafficking is created by the supply and demand of exploitable labour" (p. 116). They carry on explaining in simple words that "an economic market is a place (physical or virtual) that connects buyers ("demand") and sellers ("supply") either directly or through an intermediary [and the] main theme in the human trafficking literature is the role of intermediaries in connecting employers (the source of "labour demand") ending compliant labour with vulnerable seeking employment" (Wheaton et al, 2010, p. 116). Human trafficking is a monopolistic type of market with; (a) many sellers being in an intense competition with each other, meaning they must be flexible and adapt quickly or die, aiming towards a profit which outweighs the costs; (b) the victims of trafficking being employed with no right to decide whether to work, where to work or how many hours to work and (c) the "products" having different attributes depending on what they are sold for (prostitution, agriculture, domestic service etc) hence traffickers believing that they have some control on the selling price of the products. (ibid). The monopolistic economic market is based on one agency instead of two meaning that the decision-making is only done by the traffickers over their products and how they pull the strings over the 'supply and demand' game. However, in the other agency where in a typical economic market would be the representatives of products of human trafficking, the 'product' (victim) is limited and not represented by anyone. Consequently, by definition the person is trafficked thus 'commodified' (ibid).

Moreover, Jahic and Finckenauer (2005) argue that politics and the efforts of governments to tackle trafficking have been focusing on covering some of their own loopholes that concern immigration and organised crime control. Unfortunately, they have victim assistance as a secondary goal. "In a way, the trafficking issue may provide 'cover' for a number of anti-immigration measures that would otherwise be difficult to pass" (Jahic and Finckenauer, 2005, p. 36). Thus, if trafficking can be seen as a process

which facilitates politics but also economy, the two most powerful apparatus in the world, then how and why would they want to tackle trafficking?

### 2.3.2 Trafficking is considered to be shaped by gender

Trafficking is shaped by a gender-bias perspective (Hodge and Leitz, 2007). According to the US Department of State of 2004, 70% - 80% of those who are trafficked internationally are female and almost all of them are trafficked for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation (ibid). In 2012, according to Eurostat (2014; 2015), the situation had not changed much. Over the years 2010 – 2012, the majority (69%) of registered victims were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 19% for labour exploitation and 12% for other forms of exploitation such as removal of organs, criminal activities, selling of children or begging (Eurostat, 2014; 2015). Of those that were trafficked for sexual exploitation, 95% were predominantly female whereas the majority of registered victims of labour exploitation were male (71%) (ibid). Over the years 2010-2012, more than 70% of suspected traffickers were male and most of them, as well as most of the victims, were EU citizens (ibid).

Furthermore, the UN protocol makes a gender-biased distinction between trafficking and smuggling if viewed from a gender perspective and it even has a special category for women and girls (Van Liempt, 2006). Women are seen as objects by their traffickers, incapable of transferring themselves to another country whereas men are seen as more capable in deciding how to migrate and handle smuggling contracts (ibid). Furthermore, Cree (2008) denotes that, women and children who are discriminated because of their gender or their history of sexual and physical violence are more vulnerable to being trafficked into the sex industry.

According to Roby (2005), women and girls are objectified by a tradition which undergirds the belief that females are men's property thus having no need for respect. In Thailand, women are seen as "'things' markers in a male game of status and prestige" (Reilly, 2006, p. 96). The attitudes of

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men, and of society in general, profoundly depend on the views of women and men's role in it. The lesser a woman is seen as a human being, the greater chances she has to be trafficked.

According to Hughes (2000), the root of this gendered trafficking system comes from "patriarchal attitudes toward women in prostitution, which blame the victims for crimes committed against them" (p. 5). There is gender inequality or a gender-based discrimination which portrays women's powerlessness and men's domination (Cree, 2008). In Russia 98% of literate and university-educated women are unemployed because of employment discrimination which is tolerated by the government where government agencies should be the ones trying to redress this situation (Reilly, 2006). Men will carry on wanting to experience and test their dominance through exploitation of women in prostitution and in any other area, and women will prove their powerlessness by obeying and suffering surreptitiously. As Hughes (2000) underlines, "men create the demand and women the supply" (p. 6).

According to Melrose and Barrett (2006), women will stop being vulnerable to vice when they are politically strong and reinforced by the governments and that is where the governments should turn their attention. But if the gender inequality tolerance is not eliminated, then no matter what position in the government and what power women have, trafficking will carry on flourishing.

### 2.3.3  Trafficking as a profitable business

Trafficking is also viewed as a profitable business. Hughes (2000) states that "the growth of shadow economies and transnational criminal networks in newly independent states are negative manifestations of globalisation, arising from expanding economic, political and social transnational linkages that are increasingly beyond local and state control" (p. 1). For example, in the former Soviet Union, privatisation flourished after the collapse of the political and economic system enabling illegal markets of the shadow

economy to work legally but carry on operating with the same methods that were based on corruption (ibid).

When a system is part of the shadow economy, it is difficult to be measured. Human trafficking is such a system, hence determining the number of people that are trafficked is very difficult – "traffickers seek to evade notice and victims are often hesitant to relate their experiences due to fear of reprisals" (Hodge and Leitz, 2007, p. 163). Twenty years ago, according to Salt and Stein (1997), trafficking was becoming "an established branch of well organised international gangster syndicates" which was facilitated through illegal migration of people and brought an annual income into the United States of about five to seven billion dollars (p. 472). It was and it still is thought today, to be as lucrative as the traffic in arms and drugs and much less risky (Melrose and Barrett, 2006). Moreover, trafficking can be enabled through migration and technology such as computer communication which are two components that increase the volume and complexity of international financial transactions making the trafficking business very attractive and lucrative to criminal networks (Hughes, 2000).

Salt and Stein (1997) argued that as every business system, trafficking business employs people to work and plan smuggling operations, to gather information, finance and set tasks that have technical and operational manifestations. In addition, they contended that the trafficking business is organised through trafficking syndicates that can manipulate and circumvent the law in order to smuggle people in and out of the country (e.g. obtaining work permits or tourist visas) but also identify and exploit loopholes in legislations or gaps in border controls (Salt and Stein, 1997). It is a business that involves buying and selling products but in this type of business the products are human beings. It is a matter of supply and demand where 'products' are advertised surreptitiously and buyers enjoy their products in a secretive, illegal way which is translated to them as a challenging experience.

### 2.3.4 Trafficking is considered to be triggered by the economic status of countries

Trafficking and especially sex trafficking is influenced by an understanding which is formed by some main risk factors in the macro-level such as economic injustice and poverty. Globalisation, unfortunately, has brought more poverty, wars and other national crises which are some of the situations that many developing countries must deal with. National debt, structural adjustment efforts and trimming of budgets that concern education, health and social services, exacerbate the aforementioned situations and have had a great impact on a country's vulnerability (Roby, 2005; Dominelli, 2010). Furthermore, the globalisation of the consumer market has triggered a tendency of consumerism luring some families into exchanging, through knowledge or deception, their children with money or other kinds of goods (ibid). For example, in Thailand when parents realised how much money they would earn from selling their children, the sale of girls increased – girls were sold in order to buy a new TV set or colour television and as stated by Reilly (2006) "… it has always been the sale of girls, never boys" (p. 96; Roby, 2005)

According to the UN Human Rights Bodies, the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and many NGOs, extreme poverty is the common link between all forms of slavery (Reilly, 2006). Reilly (2006) argues the major 'push factors' of trafficking are poverty and high levels of unemployment of women. These 'push factors' put people into vulnerable situations such as trafficking but it is not as simplified as that. The vulnerability of people cannot be easily measured and put into a pattern that researchers can follow and come to conclusions. However, the economic status of a country does indicate vulnerability towards trafficking but does not make it an absolute criterion that can be utilised by governments for tackling measures.

### 2.3.5 Trafficking is facilitated by armed conflicts and migrants fleeing crisis

In 2015, the unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees to Europe made it even more challenging to identify human trafficking victims among the migrant populations (TIP Report, 2016). According to TIP Report (2016), this flow of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, because of fleeing civil war and unrest, are susceptible to human trafficking and other crimes such as extortion and rape. These people rely on smugglers to get them out of their country and take them to another one, so they are vulnerable to schemes which are specifically created to trap and deceive them in sex and labour trafficking (ibid). "Armed conflict often results in broken governments, judicial systems, job markets, and community support structures that would normally offer citizens protection from disasters and crime, including human trafficking" (TIP Report, 2016: 32). Refugee camps, displaced people, lack of security, limited social services, weak law enforcement, corruption of officials and camp official are some of the factors that enable traffickers to work and lure or force victims into trafficking (ibid). According to UNHCR, "some 6.5 million Syrians … are internally displaced and 2.5 million are refugees" (UNOCD, 2014, p. 42).

In addition, UNOCD (2014) argues that in armed conflict situations where people flee their countries and go to new ones they lose their support networks and are faced with life's everyday difficulties such as language and difficulties that amplify trafficking flows. Furthermore, through these conflicts, child soldiering, which is a form of trafficking, has been also documented (ibid).

According to UNOCD (2014), conflicts can increase the demand for sex trafficking. "It has been documented how the stationing of troops, peacekeepers and stabilisation forces (including those operating under the United Nations flag) in conflict and post-conflict zones may have fuelled the demand for girls and young women trafficked for sexual exploitation in some part of the world" (UNOCD, 2014, p. 42).

In Libya and Iraq, discrimination regarding ethnic and religious factors place people at high risk of trafficking during a time of armed conflicts (IOM, 2015). In Syria, due to the current unrest, people out of despair and in their effort to survive use forced marriages of young girls and child labour which lead to exploitation and trafficking (ibid).

## 2.4 Suggestions derived from various studies for tackling the trafficking phenomenon

Since 2002, funded projects have been conducted and training materials for frontline law enforcement officials and specialist investigators have been developed aiming for a more effective response to the human trafficking phenomenon (Gallagher and Holmes, 2008). These were carried out by the following organisations: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (ibid). However, even though there is some data and tools available for tackling human trafficking, they appear to be inadequate.

According to Roby (2005), attention needs to be paid to the following contributing factors in order to be able to combat trafficking in persons: "first, [on] the macro-level, constituting the international, national and local demographic, social, economic, ethnic and cultural environments in which trafficking occurs; and second, [on] the micro-level of individual and familial risk factors" (p. 137). With a society which promotes new levels of consumerism because of the globalisation of the consumer market thus leading to the increase in inflow of money and goods, governments have an even harder job of combating human trafficking (Roby, 2005).

Pickup (1998) argues "that the violence and abuse linked to sex work are due to stigmatisation of prostitution, and the unequal power relations

involved in the work, at all levels" (p. 44). The "appropriate policy responses should therefore be based on an empowering approach; increasing women's opportunities to help themselves is a more effective use of resources to prevent trafficking than the abolitionist strategies of the past" (Pickup, 1998, p.44). Melrose and Barrett (2006) also said that when women are economically and politically strong, they will not be purchasable for the basic use of vice. It is therefore developing the economic and political strength of women that must receive the attention of governments in the 21st century (ibid).

Moreover, according to the TIP Report (2016), it is very critical for governments and international organisations to be in a better position to identify and help trafficking victims among migrant populations. "This can be accomplished by making efforts to ensure adequate staffing in centres and training immigration officials, including those changed with interviewing asylum applicants, to screen for indicators of trafficking. Another important opportunity for prevention is at ports of entry, where authorities can facilitate the distribution of information to migrants, including refugees on the risks of human trafficking and available resources from governments, international organisations, and NGOs. Inspections at worksites employing foreign labourers, training for police on indicators of sex and labour trafficking, and providing refugees and asylum-seekers with opportunities to work are all worthy prevention efforts" (TIP Report, 2016, p. 22).

IOM (2015) suggested three specific parameters of response to combating trafficking concerning the before, during and after the trafficking situation. Therefore, prevention should be encouraged alongside the efforts of the state but also through the appropriate training of officials and NGOs for identifying the at-risk populations and trafficking victim, the creation of a National Referral Mechanism in times of crisis, and a well-structured and coordinated collaboration amidst the government and non-government actors (IOM, 2015).

With regards to direct tackling of trafficking, IOM (2015) explains that great importance should be paid to the protection of the victims by advocating for them through a cluster system, undertaking rapid assessments by trained staff, drafting local and national standard operating procedures, being clear on roles and responsibilities for actors through emergency referral mechanisms, identifying safe places for the victims of trafficking, providing reintegration assistance to victims, promptly appointing a legal guardian to unaccompanied and separated children victims of trafficking, family tracing and reunification, and being able to benefit them through either state or non-governmental legal support and finally by providing them with information about their rights.

As far as the period after the trafficking situation is concerned, IOM (2015) argues that prosecution should be encouraged and the criminal justice system should keep evolving by analysing and evaluating all the measures taken during a crisis phase.

Even though IOM's suggestions exemplify a more holistic approach to tackling human trafficking, Lenzerini (2009) argues that a victim-oriented (human rights) approach is the most effective. Verbatim says: "only through a victim-oriented approach is it possible to create the conditions for allowing the victim to perceive a feeling of serenity and safeness suitable for leading them to cooperate with justice as a witness in order to actually prosecute their traffickers and exploiters for their horrific crimes, as well as, at the same time, prevent recurrence of the crime and revenge by those criminals against the victims themselves" (p. 237). Recapitulating, if the attention is on the wellbeing and safety of the victim, then it will be easier to unfold the horrific crimes of traffickers and prevent them from happening again.

On the other hand, Melrose and Barrett (2006) argue that the growth of human trafficking in Europe is linked to the economic, historical, and political conditions of each country and if these conditions are not understood, then no solution will ever be effective in combating trafficking in

persons. These conditions are:

- "Increasing globalisation and inequality amongst advanced industrial societies and those countries where poverty is endemic
- War and conflict in various regions of the world
- The global subjugation of women
- The growth of telecommunications and expansion of information technology
- The transnationalisation of the sex industry
- The reconfiguration of Europe" (Melrose and Barrett, 2006, p. 115)

## 2.5    Conclusion

Trafficking is a complex and full of contradictions. It includes a variety of issues that need to be dealt with but also understandings and theoretical frameworks that need to be taken into consideration when forming tackling policies. Trafficking is viewed as prostitution, labour exploitation and irregular migration but it would be mistaken to define trafficking only through these three aspects. It concerns the impingement of people's rights. Even though definitions of trafficking were given over time in order to help the nations to understand it, there are still some ambiguities that offer room for misinterpretation.

The extent of trafficking is generally difficult to measure since it is done underground and the exact amounts of money and people that are involved in it cannot be exactly counted, nor can the trafficking victims since most of them do not report to the police and most of those who do are sent back home and are trafficked again. The fact that the exact numbers are not available does not mean that the trafficking problem is not supposed to get the attention that it needs. There is a lot of research done on trafficking and more specifically on sex trafficking but there is not a lot of empirical data

since it is so difficult to get. But from what is out there, trafficking information is influenced by the various theories that were drawn by researchers' interpretations of the social knowledge and experience of trafficking which are affected by factors such as the social, cultural, economic and political construction of a country. Also, the gender issues and gender inequalities that prevail, the shadow economy and the profit that is spread worldwide, the organised crime through global networks, and the economic status of a country.

Konrad (2006) argues that human trafficking is a security issue and a human rights' concern, so if governments want to successfully fight it, then they should tackle those two together. She supports the protection of victims of trafficking within the country they were trafficked and not the immediate deportation of them. The victims are "the primary source of witnesses for the prosecution [thus] a victim-centred approach to law enforcement is not only consistent but logical if law enforcement objectives are to be achieved" (Konrad, 2006. p. 133). Something that the UN Protocol tried to address but the information is meagre. Moreover, the voices and realities of the victims' experiences should be heard and acted upon.

The Brussels Declaration of 2002 stated that: "root causes of trafficking, including the status of girls, social and cultural attitudes, and the demand for sexual services, cheap labour and other forms of exploitation must continue to be at the forefront of the long-term efforts to fight human trafficking effectively. A global approach to trafficking must address all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, in particular child labour, and begging" (Van den Anker, 2006, p. 189).

Tackling the trafficking problem is not easy. It is identified in many countries and it is a devious process that shapes a business and organised crime. A clear understanding of it is imperative and it needs to be viewed holistically by the nations' governments. As Pickup (1998) said: "It is important to view trafficking in women holistically, as a cycle that begins before women leave

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their country of origin, encompasses their experiences in the host country, and continues after their return" (p. 49). Therefore, all the aforementioned views should be examined under scrutiny and should perturb everyone's perception about trafficking; especially the ones that have the power for change e.g. social workers and social policy makers. The social workers in particular are challenged because through globalisation their work has become even harder; the number of poor people has grown and cross border problems have increased, therefore their practice becomes more bureaucratised and commodified etc (Dominelli, 2010). In conclusion, all nations need to collaborate tackle the issue and form stronger policies on prosecuting the criminals thus protecting the people identified as being trafficked.

**CHAPTER 3:** **TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN CYPRUS, ITS HISTORY AND CURRENT RESPONSES IN SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

## 3.1    Introduction

Cyprus is a small island with a population of approximately 800,000 people. It is considered to be a small society which is still functioning based on patriarchy (The Protection Project, 2003; Trimikliniotis, 2009). Even though trafficking of women is not always associated with prostitution, there is a tendency in Cyprus because of its cultural tolerance towards prostitution, for trafficked women to be circulated within prostitution networks (Trimikliniotis, 2009). In general, human trafficking appeared in Cyprus at the beginning of the 1990s where thousands of women from Asia were lured by promising job opportunities with high salaries and were then led into prostitution and local cabarets and bars (The Protection Project, 2003). But only the last six to seven years has it become one of the most troubling phenomena that the government has had to face. Cyprus, because of its geographical position – in the middle of three continents – is considered a transit and also a destination country for human trafficking. This chapter firstly presents the history of Cyprus offering, this way, an understanding of why Cyprus came to be an attractive country for traffickers, and it then explores trafficking of women for commercial sex in Cyprus and the extent to which it appears to be affecting Cypriot society. Furthermore, it will explore the various ways that the government of Cyprus has adopted or planned to adopt in order to tackle human trafficking. Unfortunately, information on the trafficking situation in Cyprus is meagre. A common interest amongst the Ministries and academics towards trafficking has only started to flourish in the last few years.

## 3.2    The island of Cyprus

Cyprus is the third biggest island in the Mediterranean Sea and it is also an island with a long history that traces back around 9.000 years. Most evidence starts from 395 with the Byzantium era that lasted for almost 800 years until 1191. Before this era, Cyprus is just referred to as Ancient Cyprus. From 1192 - 1489 the Franks occupied the island and then the Venetians from 1489 - 1570. In 1571, it was the Ottoman Empire's turn to rule the island for 300 years (until 1878) where Cyprus was sold to Great Britain under the condition that Great Britain would help Turkey in case of a new war. The Queen of Great Britain came to the island luring her way in by giving gold coins to the poor and occupying political positions to be able to rule and control the Cypriots. Taxes were then forced upon the Cypriots. In 1931, the Cypriots attempted to rebel, so as a result, the British suppressed their patriotic spirit by punishing any action involving Greek superiority. This suppression led to the biggest and most important fight for Cyprus, the 1955 -1959 Liberation Battle that was long over-due. There was such a unified patriotic spirit led by mostly young Cypriot students, together with General Grivas - Digenis and Archbishop Makarios that a win was certain. After four years of fighting, Cyprus was announced an independent country after the Zurich agreement in London. The ceremony for its independence took place on 16 August, 1960. Cyprus had its first president Archbishop Makarios and Vice President Dr Fazil Kutsuk. However, its independence unfortunately did not last long.

In 1963, the first serious conflicts between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots started taking place and so Turkey felt the need to intervene to protect its people. The separation of the two groups of people was happening not only in residential areas but in the political venues too. The British intervened and drew a line with a green marker on the map separating the capital Nicosia into two parts. That line remains until today and is known as the green line making Nicosia the only divided capital in the world. In 1974, the Turks invaded Cyprus and took 37 per cent of the island (north side). The rest of the island (south side) is still independent

and has been ruled by the Greek Cypriots until today. The "Cyprus problem", as it is referred to, has unfortunately no solution and it has been in the political agenda of the government for the past 43 years now[3]. Within these 43 years Cyprus has evolved both economically and socially very fast since after the war all the Greek Cypriots had to move to the south side of the island, refugees in their own country, most of whom had lost all their fortune and had to start from scratch. The recovery from the war was fast and the economic and social level of the island started booming at a fast pace.

On 1 May 2008, Cyprus joined the European Union (EU) and on 1 January 2008, the Eurozone, however the borders had opened in April 2003 where for the first time, after the war in 1974, the Greek Cypriots could visit their homes on the north side and the Turkish Cypriots theirs on the south side. No animosity was observed from either part. Even though the opening of the borders was a political strategy to enter the EU, it has also accommodated various illicit actions, transportations of goods and people from one side to the other. Because the north state is not recognised by any other country besides Turkey, there is not a lot of data on the political apparatus and no interventions, of any kind, can occur from one side to the other for any reason.

Through a short summary of Cyprus' history, it is apparent that Cyprus has been occupied by many conquerors for hundreds of years each time. As a result, a lot of social and cultural traits from each conqueror have had a strong influence on the people of Cyprus and left an impression on the land. It is also safe to say that Cypriots have been through a lot of suffering; struggling each time for their freedom and independence, an attitude that has been passed on from one generation to the next. People who lived through the British colonisation, the Liberation Battle (1955-1959) and the

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[3] All the aforementioned information was taken by three Greek books: Spanos, et.al., 1995; Maragkou and Koutas, 2009; and Chotzakoglou, 2008

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war in 1974 are still alive. They have had children and their children have had their own children all raised with the same principles and values namely patriarchy and gender segregation, which are cultural attitudes that are still applied today. These cultural attitudes that emanate from Cyprus history in addition to the opening of the borders, has increased the chances for women trafficking to flourish in Cyprus.

Furthermore, around the decade of Cyprus' independence in 1960 and the next, a migration net was created mostly towards the UK. After the 1974 events in Cyprus, the migration carried on and in 1990 a need for more labour help was apparent and especially for domestic workers. In order to meet these low-skill labour shortages, the government abandoned the restrictive immigration policy resulting in a big influx of immigrants that added up to 138,000 (approximately 16% of the whole population) in 2008, 70,000 of which came from the European Union (Trimikliniotis, 2009). Trimikliniotis (2009) stated that most of the immigrants were employed in domestic work, the service industry, such as tourism and trade, the manufacturing industry, agriculture and construction, generally in low-paid and low-status jobs. More specifically, migrant women in Cyprus were either working as domestic workers or in the sex industry. According to the TIP Report (2010), vulnerable people who are most likely to become victims of labour are trafficking people that work as domestic workers and asylum seekers or foreign migrants that work in the farming and agricultural sectors. In addition, according to the Cyprus Foreign and Immigration Office, a lot of migrants entered Cyprus illegally from the Northern occupied territories (in 2009 3.781 out of 8.037 in total, in 2010 1.855 out of 8.005 and in 2011 1.311 out of 8.231) (Cyprus Annual Police Report, 2009 & 2011). In addition, the Mediterranean Sea appears to be the portal for irregular migrants, coming from the Middle East and North Africa, to enter the EU countries and Cyprus is located right in the middle of them making it a country of destination and transit for irregular migrants (Cyprus Annual Police Report, 2011).

## 3.3    Human trafficking in Cyprus

The presentation of the extent of human trafficking in Cyprus is portrayed mostly though the police and NGO's reports on victims and their traffickers provided that the victims choose to turn them in to the police. In addition, it is portrayed through the investigations of two major organisations that coordinate actions internationally towards the elimination of trafficking and these are the Government of State of the United States of America and GRETA. More precisely, in the following sections (3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3), the situation of HT in Cyprus is presented in numbers (according to the discretion of the governmental bodies' methods of data collection, hence the real numbers might be distorted to some degree) but also the societal responses are delineated in regard to HT in Cyprus in an attempt to portray the social influences from where policies are formed.

### 3.3.1   Statistical presentation of the extent of human trafficking in Cyprus

The Department of State of the United States of America publishes a Trafficking In Persons (TIP) report every year and uses it as a diplomatic tool to motivate foreign governments in engaging with human trafficking and in creating and implementing policies and laws to combat trafficking. It also makes an effort to find resources in creating programmes that highlight the 4Ps, as they are referred to today: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. Therefore, the TIP report is considered to be the world's most comprehensive resource of government anti-human trafficking efforts.

The TIP Report is updated every year with each participating country's new actions towards tackling human trafficking and not according to the extent of the problem. Each country is then put under a Tier system which is as follows: "Tier 1: countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards; Tier 2: countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards; Tier 2 Watch List: countries whose

governments do not fully comply with the Act's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards AND: a) The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; or b) There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; or c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year; Tier 3: countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so" (TIP Report 2007, p. 27).

GRETA, on the other hand, is a monitoring system which was formed by the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in order to collect and evaluate data from each country's human trafficking situation. It is composed of fifteen independent and impartial experts who have highly recognised competencies in the fields of human rights, who offer assistance and protection of victims and in general take action against trafficking of human beings (GRETA, 2011). Both of these entities use their own methods to collect the data from each country by either collecting the already existing reports from the various government and NGO services or by interviewing key informants from these services aiming to observe and monitor their actions towards the 4 "Ps" paradigm which is considered as the fundamental international framework, used by all countries, to combat all forms of slavery. It is outlined in both the United Nation's Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Initially it was called the 3 "Ps" paradigm: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution and in 2009 the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, introduced the fourth – Partnership – which targets the national and international collaboration and cooperation.

Cyprus, as mentioned previously, is considered to be a source and a destination country for men, women and children that are lured into labour and sex trafficking. The people identified as victims in Cyprus, in the year 2015, came from India, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Romania, Philippines, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Slovakia, and Czech Republic, whilst in 2016 a few more countries were added: Latvia, Dominican Republic, China, Turkey, Togo, and Paraguay (TIP Report, 2016; TIP Report, 2017). Women victims that were subjected to sex trafficking mostly came from Eastern Europe, Vietnam, India, sub-Saharan Africa and for the first time from Paraguay. Sex trafficking in Cyprus in earlier years, was mostly observed in cabarets. There were over 100 registered cabarets all over Cyprus but after the abolition of the 'artist visa' in 2008 only a handful are left (GRETA, 2015). However, since there have been stricter measures on cabaret work permits, the traffickers changed their methods and locations for their illegal activities and moved them in private apartments or hotels, on the street, in bars, pubs, and even coffee shops (TIP Report, 2017). In addition, some women victims are being deceived through false promises of marriage or work as barmaids or hostesses (ibid).

According to GRETA (2015) the identified victims of THB were 52 in 2010 and decreased each year reaching 30 in 2013. In 2014 and 2015 there was again an increase reaching 42 victims. The number of victims of GRETA differs to those of TIP Reports (see Table 3.1) revealing the dispersed data amongst the services. However, the difference is not significant. Furthermore, researchers and services have pointed out that there has been a decrease in the number of victims of sex trafficking in the last couple of years and on the other hand, labour trafficking has grown consisting of half of the identified victims in 2014 and two-thirds of all victims in 2015 (GRETA, 2015).

GRETA's interlocutors argue that the number of sex trafficking victims has decreased because prostitution has moved from cabarets to venues that are more difficult to be investigated such as hotels, private apartments and

Massage parlours (ibid) implying, in a way, that it could possibly exist to the same extent as before just under a different and more covert form. To make matters worse, it is clear that in Cyprus only women are used in sex trafficking and unfortunately in 2014 three children were also identified as victims of sex trafficking and of other forms in 2015, mainly for begging (see Table 3.2) (TIP Report, 2015 and 2016).

**Table 3.1: THB – Identified Victims from 2009 - 2016** (Statistical data drawn from the TIP Reports 2010 - 2017)

| Types of THB | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex Trafficking | 21 | 24 | 16 | 16 | 13 | 19 | 13 | 10 | 132 |
| Labour Trafficking | 93 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 12 | 22 | 22 | 3 | 203 |
| Other | - | | - | - | - | - | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| Total | 114 | 41 | 32 | 32 | 25 | 46 (1) | 40 | 21 | **353 (1)** |

(1) The additional five persons were women that were victims of both sex and labour trafficking

**Table 3.2: Types of THB by Gender** (Gender specifications in the reports only appeared the last three years 2014, 2015 and 2016 - Statistical data drawn from the TIP Reports 2015, 2016 and 2017)

| Types of THB | Gender | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex Trafficking | Women | 16 | 13 | 10 | 39 |
| | Men | - | - | - | |
| | Girls | - | - | - | |
| | Boys | - | - | - | |
| | Children | 3 | - | - | 3 |
| | Total | 19 (1) | 13 | | 42 |
| Labour Trafficking | Women | 7 | 6 | 3 | 16 |
| | Men | 15 | 16 | | 31 |
| | Girls | - | - | | |
| | Boys | - | - | | |

| Types of THB | Gender | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Children | - | - | | |
| | **Total** | 22 (1) | 22 | | 47 |
| **Other** | Women | - | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| | Men | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| | Girls | - | 1 | | 1 |
| | Boys | - | 1 | | 1 |
| | Children | - | 2 (2) | | 2 |
| | **Total** | - | 5 | | 13 |
| | **Grand Total** | 46 (1) | 40 | | 86 (1) |

(1) In 2014, the total of the identified victims of labour and sex trafficking were 46. Five additional women were victims of both types of trafficking.
(2) Gender was not specified.

Another factor that appears to affect the appearance of sex trafficking in Cyprus is that prostitution, per se, is not prohibited by law, making Cyprus an even more popular country of destination. Some related activities of prostitution, though, are prohibited and punished by the Cyprus Criminal Code (1959) such as: the maintenance or management of a brothel or allowing the use of a premise as a brothel (sect 156), the procuring of a woman to be a prostitute (sect. 157), the detainment of a woman in a brothel against her will (sect. 162), living on the earnings of prostitution (sect. 164), and aiding for the prostitution of another woman (sect. 165). In conclusion, a person is legally allowed to be a prostitute as long as they are not coerced or exploited to practice it and they, or anyone else, do not make any profit out of it. In addition, in Cyprus, cabarets are socially associated with brothels and it is public knowledge that the cabaret owners are well aware of the relating laws consequently managing to find different ways to circumvent the sections of the law on prostitution (e.g. accepting only cash for payment and giving no receipts, forcing women to be prostitutes but if they do not want to be prostitutes, they are coerced and threatened so they won't tell anyone etc). Therefore, since prostitution, per

se, is not illegal in Cyprus, there is a lot of tolerance towards this behaviour of women and consequently of men too. This type of behaviour makes it a lot more difficult for the government and the NGOs to tackle sex trafficking. In addition, according to the TIP report (2007):

> Prostitution and related activities – including pimping and patronising or maintaining brothels – encourage the growth of modern-day slavery by providing a façade behind which traffickers for sexual exploitation operate. Where prostitution is tolerated there is a greater demand for human trafficking victims and nearly always an increase in the number of women and children trafficked into commercial sex slavery (p. 27).

In conclusion, the extent of HTB in Cyprus is not possible to measure exactly as it is not possible to measure anywhere. However, its position and its cultural tolerance towards prostitution makes Cyprus a high-risk country for sex trafficking. The government of Cyprus has gradually reacted to this phenomenon after being pressured by the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Department of State of the United States of America, as it is presented further down, and GRETA.

### 3.3.2 Demand for sexual exploitation of women in Cyprus

Demand for sexual exploitation of women in Cyprus has been scarcely researched and not on a large scale. Trimiklinioties is the only academic and researcher who attempted to conduct such a study in 2009 also included various characteristics of people that search for sexual pleasure through cabarets. Unfortunately, his study is merely representative, as far as the trafficking situation in Cyprus is concerned, since the sample included only 35 men randomly chosen from mainly the two bigger cities of Cyprus with no specific variable categories making it hard to compare and verify results. The results of his research reflect the common social knowledge and stereotypes and being a Cypriot man himself tended to support his findings. Therefore, it is important to point out that general conclusions about the level of demand cannot be drawn from it.  Bearing

that in mind, Trimikliniotis (2009) stated that Cypriot men buy sex services because they think that it is easy sex and because 'those women' have no demands and want no commitment. Furthermore, most men that participated in his research and visited cabarets did not believe that women were coerced into having sex. However, some of the men felt that women who had intercourse with them did not really want to be with them (Trimikliniotis, 2009). Trimikliniotis (2009) indicated that the majority of men who use illegal sexual services belong in the age group of 20 – 30 years old, followed by the group of 30 – 40 years old with fewer people and even fewer in the group of above 40 years old. He also denoted that many of the men who use illegal sexual services are married and well educated (ibid).

### 3.3.3 Culture's influence on demand and social prejudice against the sex workers

Cyprus, being the island of beauty and love according to Greek mythology, developed strong gender segregation where women can be viewed through a bilateral type of love and beauty – wife and mistress. The latter was viewed with disrespect since mistresses are unethical according to the orthodox religion and they are called 'poutanes' (whores) by the locals. According to Hadjichristos (2007), throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, prostitution in Cyprus was evident in specific and well known streets in the two main cities where prostitutes resided in a house usually with a red light outside the door. Hadjichristos (2007) argues that today only a few of these older prostitutes still live in those premises but in bad conditions, however the prostitutes of today are transferred to night clubs or cabarets where the housing conditions may be better and the roles and scenarios have changed therefore putting these women in more vulnerable situations by luring them to exploitation.

Lentz (2007), during her investigation on women trafficking in Cyprus, found some inconsistencies with government procedures as far as the women that are brought from abroad to work in nightclubs or cabarets are concerned. She also found a cultural trend towards these women from

people of key positions in the government. The 'artistes' or 'poutanes' (whores), as they are still called by most Cypriot people, are obliged by law to do some medical tests including AIDS tests. Lentz (2007) interviewed the director of the hospital department who is responsible for the aforementioned tests and she stated that the specific women (artistes) are treated like prostitutes during their tests by the hospital personnel and it is also her belief, as she stated, that all of these women know in advance that they are coming to Cyprus to work as prostitutes. Lentz (2007) also interviewed the director of Alien and Immigration Service and, through his questions, discovered that the director also surfaced prejudice behaviour towards the 'artistes'.

It is public knowledge in the Cypriot society that prostitution exists, that the 'artistes' come to Cyprus to be prostitutes and it is well known where they are placed and where anyone can find and use their services. Prostitution is socially tolerated and accepted but the attitude and behaviour from society towards the prostitutes is obscene. As Trimikliniotis (2009) found, through his research about demand for prostitution and trafficking, almost all men that were interviewed believed that women in cabarets wanted to have intercourse with them, meaning that they were not coerced into it; a few of the men actually thought that the women were sexually attracted to them.

## 3.4 The government of Cyprus' policies and practices on human trafficking

Even though the government of Cyprus has experienced the phenomenon of THB since the 1990s, only the last ten years (since 2007) has it started reacting. At this point, the government of Cyprus' policies are presented by addressing the four Ps: Prevention, Prosecution, Protection and Partnership.

### 3.4.1 Prevention

Prevention, in relation to what the Department of State described, concerns the rectification of law, law enforcement, implementation measures addressing vulnerable populations, construction of labour recruitment programmes to protect the workers from being exploited, strengthening partnerships between all the entities involved through effective communication and coordination patterns[4].

According to Trimikliniotis & Souroulla (2006), the first reports on human trafficking that were based on empirical investigation appeared in 2003 and contributed awareness to the Cypriot public. In 2004, the Report on Cyprus by Alvaro Robles, the European Commissioner for Human Rights, was released to the Cypriot public which started provoking debates on the matter (ibid). In addition, Cyprus is the tenth country which ratified the European Commission's Convention for the Action against human trafficking (Trimikliniotis, 2010). Furthermore, Cyprus participated in one of the most extensive research carried out by the US Department of State through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) that was enacted in 2001 and which included the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP).

Cyprus was placed in Tier 2 Watch List of the U.S. State Department TIP Report in 2004 (where it remained for four executive years) because it did not fully comply with the minimum standards for tackling the problem thus exposing the government of Cyprus' inability to combat human trafficking. Under these circumstances, the government of Cyprus was obliged to make an effort for improvement. Therefore, in 2007 the coordination of all actions aimed at combating human trafficking was appointed to the Minister of Interior according to the 87(I)/2007 Law and at the same time, a Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) was formed, with the Minister as the coordinator, to examine all the issues concerning human trafficking

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[4] Derived from: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/167334.pdf

and take measures to tackle it and protect the victims. The MCG consisted, and still consists, of all the government bodies and NGOs that are involved in human trafficking matters and these are: representatives of the Attorney General of the Republic of Cyprus, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Welfare, Labour and Social Insurance, the Social Welfare Services, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Civil Registry and Migration Department, the Asylum Service, the National Mechanism for Women's Rights, the Union of Cyprus' Municipalities (a new addition under the Law 60(I)/2014) and two NGOs: the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and KISA Migrant and Refugee Centre (up to four NGOs according to the Law 13(I)/2012).

The MCG's main responsibilities were and still are: to form national action plans and follow their implementation; to collaborate with the countries of origin, transit or destination, the protection of victims and the development of possibilities to tackle the crimes according to the law; to observe and analyse the developments in the international law; to draw an annual report concerning the implementation of the law and the existing human trafficking situation both within the Republic of Cyprus and at an international level.

The former Minister of Interior of Cyprus Mr. Silikiotis, in his efforts to change and improve the human trafficking situation in Cyprus and as the coordinator of the MCG, announced a new policy which was enacted and put into effect as of 1 February 2009, and concerned the abolition of entrance into Cyprus by people that had any kind of "artistic" profession, consequently the abolition of the 'artist visa' was replaced by the 'work visa' allowing people to stay in Cyprus only for three months at a time (Trimikliniotis, 2010). Also in November 2007, the first State Shelter was created and run. From the beginning, the shelter was and still is under the supervision of the Social Welfare Services. Moreover, in 2008, the Ministry of Interior organised an awareness campaign that lasted for 4 months (ibid).

Furthermore, in 2009, the MCG drafted and passed a new National Action Plan for 2010 - 2012 (NAP) which replaced the first NAP of 2001 and then drafted and passed another one for 2013 - 2015 (TIP report, 2014 & 2016). The two latest NAPs were repetitive since a lot of the aims of the 2010 - 2012 NAP had not been accomplished. Cyprus has been bouncing between Tier 2 to Tier 2 Watch List for many years because according to the US Department of State. it did not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking despite its efforts to abolish the 'artist' visa, to operate a state shelter and to form new NAPs. According to the TIP Reports (2011 - 2013), Cyprus failed to vigorously prosecute or convict trafficking offenders or any officials that were complicit in trafficking, the implementation of the NAP was slow and it made few improvements where the protection of the victims of trafficking is concerned. In addition, the abolition of the 'artist' visa was simply replaced by other forms of work visas which traffickers managed to exploit in order to circumvent the law.

The last time that Cyprus was placed in Tier 2 Watch List was in 2014. Even though the government of Cyprus has made significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards to eliminate the trafficking situation (such as amending and strengthening the legislation, forming a new action plan, expanding the anti-trafficking police unit by adding a forensic psychologist, a psychologist, a criminologist and a social worker), there has been a significant decrease in law enforcement, investigation, prosecution and convictions. From this point on, the government of Cyprus' efforts have started increasing in all areas moving to Tier 2 in 2015 and for the first time to Tier 1 in 2016 since it finally managed to fully comply with the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking. There was a conviction of 31 traffickers in comparison with only nine in 2014 (see table 3) and also the anti-trafficking police increased the number of its members from eight to 12 and its authority got expanded therefore making it the leading authority of investigations throughout the country. Victims were prioritised, compared to other vulnerable beneficiaries, in terms of receiving financial support whereas in previous years there had been some delays. Despite that,

Cyprus was downgraded to Tier 2 in the TIP report of 2017. According to the report of 2017, the government of Cyprus had fewer convictions, prosecutions and identification of victims. It also failed in its collaboration with the three main NGOs that withdrew from the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) "due to the non-substantive role of NGOs and infrequent meetings".

### 3.4.2 Prosecution

Prosecution should involve the collaboration of the law enforcement bodies, the government and the NGOs in order to be able to ensure justice and fair treatment to all involved in trafficking[5].

The government of Cyprus has adopted the Palermo Protocol's definition of 2000 and has enacted an explicit law on human trafficking which was reassessed and overwritten by a new law in 2007 titled: 'Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and Protection of Victims Law' (Law 87(I)/2007). The Law was amended in 2012 and stated that there should be four and not two NGOs participating in the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (Law 13(I)/2012). The last ratification of the law that replaced the previous law was done on the 15/4/2014 (Law 60(I)/2014) called "The Prevention, Fighting against Trafficking in and Exploitation of Human Beings and Protection of Victims". The new law defines human trafficking as:

"The recruitment, employment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt or accommodation of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control and/or authority over these persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of

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[5] Derived from: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/167334.pdf

exploitation. Exploitation includes the exploitation of prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation including pornography, the exploitation of labour or services including forced or compulsory labour or services, beggary, forced street vendors, slavery or practices similar to slavery, domestic servitude, the exploitation of criminal activities, the exploitation of a person for completing the adoption procedures, the removal, the transit or trade of organs, or other biological substances, tissues or fetuses (Law 60(I)/2014).

The new Law also focused more on the protection of the victims since no victim of trafficking was deported. They shall be allowed to stay and remain in Cyprus thus receiving all the benefits that Cypriots are eligible for.  It also changed the definition of 'victim' to include any person that was trafficked or exploited whether they sustained damage or not. Furthermore, the Law 60(I)/2014, for the first time, pays attention to the buyers of services by penalising them when there is a reasonable suspicion that the service they receive is provided by a victim of trafficking. However, even though the criminalisation of clients is a drastic move towards the prevention of trafficking, unfortunately there have been no convictions of clients so far. Two more things that the new Law states, concerns the increase of staff working in the Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to a total number of eight (later on in 2015 was increased to 12) and an independent external evaluator to monitor and evaluate all the actions that the government and NGOs are taking to combat trafficking and also to monitor and evaluate the works of the multidisciplinary coordinating group.

The Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings' officers have increased in number (12 in total in 2015) and are trained accordingly. They participate in operations for combating trafficking remain in contact with the victims until the final court decision, participate in public awareness campaigns and co-operate with foreign services, government or non-government organisations and finally organise and run training programmes for police members in collaboration with the Cyprus Police Academy.

According to Table 3, it is apparent that while the cases investigated by the police have decreased, the number of offenders being convicted has increased. This could be an indication that the implementation of the law and the experiences of the government and non-government services have improved throughout the years.

**Table 3.3:** **Cases investigated and persons convicted for trafficking 2010-2016** (Statistical data drawn from the TIP Reports 2010 – 2017 and Cyprus Police Annual Reports 2015)

| Prosecution | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cases investigated | 29 | 18 | 47 | 15 | 24 | 14 | 26 (4) | 173 |
| Traffickers convicted | 3 | 1 | 20 (1) | 9 (2) | 9 (3) | 31 (3) | 1 (3) | 74 |

(1)     Most of the traffickers were convicted under non-trafficking statuses and received more lenient sentences.
(2)     Only two were convicted under the law for labour trafficking.
(3)     All the traffickers were convicted for sex trafficking.
(4)     13 suspects of sex trafficking and 13 for forced labour

Moreover, according to the US Department of State's Human Rights report (2009), during the year of 2009, "there were allegations of corruption and xenophobia related to trafficking in the police force, the Ministry of Interior, and the Attorney General's Office". In April 2008, four bishops from the Greek Orthodox Church alleged, during parliamentary hearings that 'certain government officials' were collaborating with traffickers. During the hearings, a local newspaper called 'Alithia' reported that police submitted a confidential report to a parliamentary committee stating that individuals involved with trafficking in persons "have influence on government officials, which makes the arrest and prosecution of traffickers more difficult". Since those allegations were brought to light, there have been no convictions of any corrupted officials to date.

As a discernible conclusion, the conviction of perpetrators, whether they are traffickers, corrupted officers, or clients, is still minimal thus raising questions and contradictions as far as culture and social tolerance are

concerned as well as the power of the underworld influence and the modus operandi of the social system in general. Furthermore, the law still needs to be amended, as far as its conviction section is concerned and the criminalisation of the clients which is still ambiguous since each client is left to decide, at their own discretion, whether the person they paid for sex was a victim of trafficking or not. Also, the judiciary system should be more effective.

### 3.4.3  Protection

Protection, according to the Department of State of the United States, is accomplished by the efforts of implementing the "3Rs – Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration"[6]. Identification is a crucial first step in order to be able to offer the appropriate support and protection to the victims hence the governments should make the necessary proactive identification efforts and provide specialised training to the first-line officers (ibid).

Cyprus has had a bad history concerning sex trafficking. This is highlighted through the case of one victim's protection in 2001, named Oxana Rancheva, a 20-year-old woman from Russia. This story was probably the reason why the government of Cyprus started to be more proactive towards sex trafficking since it was broadcasted all over Europe and the United States. Rancheva came to Cyprus with an 'artist' visa to work in a cabaret however she left three days later only to be found by her employer again. He took her to the police with the intent to send her back as an illegal and bring another girl to replace her but the police did not find any evidence she was illegal and sent her back with her employer. An hour later, Rancheva fell from the fifth floor of a building while trying to escape from an apartment owned by her cabaret owner employer. The police did not investigate further attributing her death to an accident. Cyprus and Russia both were both found guilty for breaching articles of the European Convention on

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[6] Derived from: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/167334.pdf

Human Rights which prohibits slavery and forced labour. Both countries had to award damage to the victim's father (Humans Right's Report, 2009). The case had pending accusations coming from the victim's father concerning the prosecution of the the two policemen that sent Rancheva back to her trafficker (the owner of the cabaret that she was trafficked in) when she was brought to them by him for deportation. Sixteen years later, on the 3 of February 2017, the district court found all three suspects innocent (Nestoros, 2017). The story of Rancheva has been portrayed as bad practice and the government of Cyprus has been judged badly for it.

However, the government of Cyprus has made efforts towards the improvement of the protection of the victims since Rancheva's case, ensuring that stories like hers will not be repeated. For example, since the amendment of the Law 87(I)/2007) which was inadequate as far as the protection of victims is concerned and the implementation of the new Law (60(I)/2014, the government has begun to make significant changes assuring that the victims are protected and are provided, with no discrimination, with all the necessary means for their wellbeing e.g. safe accommodation, psychological, material and financial assistance, access to free emergency and basic medical treatment and access to educational programmes. Also, victims that hold a temporary residence permit or certificate of identification have the right to work as any other Cypriot citizen.

Furthermore, the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Persons (MCGATIP) has prepared a national referral mechanism that outlines the procedures for victim identification and referral to government services and NGOs as well as the whole 'support system' for victims describing their rights and choices as European citizens and citizens of developing countries Figure 3.1 represents the process a victim of trafficking will go through (the 'support system'), given by the researcher and augmented by Law 60(I)/2014. This was an effort to better coordinate the various services that deal with people who have been trafficked and

also to assure their protection and support. The procedure for helping the victims of trafficking from the moment they escape their trafficking situation has evolved since the legislation has evolved (see Appendix 11 for the procedure presentation in a graph with the old law 87(I)/2007). The main changes in the law concerns the various choices that the victims of developing countries are given in order to assure that they are in no danger even if the Ministry of Interior decides to send them back to their country of origin. In addition, if they do get a permit to stay in the Republic of Cyprus, then they are granted with all the rights that a Cypriot citizen is eligible for.

### 3.4.4  Partnerships

The government of Cyprus has collaborated with the group of experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in 2010 and 2015, where questionnaires were completed. GRETA then arranged country visits where the GRETA allegation met with Cyprus authorities, non-government organisations and visited the government-run shelter for women identified as having been trafficked. GRETA's findings on the human trafficking situation of Cyprus were critically intense, exhuming various aspects of the government's system in tackling human trafficking thus causing the government's reaction of dissatisfaction as they believed that GRETA's comments were not always plausible. GRETA argued that the NAP of Cyprus to tackle human trafficking is slow in action whereas the government of Cyprus replied that things are in motion. Furthermore, GRETA disagrees with the definition of the 'victim of trafficking' in Law 87(I)/2007 and "urges the Cypriot authorities to ensure that no conditions of damage or loss are required in order for a person to qualify as a victim of THB and to benefit from the assistance and protection measures provided by the law".

**Figure 3.1:** **Detection of victims of trafficking and the support system process (according to the reformed Law 60(I)/2014)**



The European citizens have the right to reside and circulate within Cyprus according to the proposed legislation.

| Support bodies | Procedure | Procedure stops | Victims' choices |

Moreover, the government of Cyprus collaborated with the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR), which is under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and works on promoting gender equality, availing their National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality (2007-2013) which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29 August 2007, in collaboration with other government and non-government bodies. According to GRETA (2011) the NMWR's action plan would contribute to the implementation of the NAP against human trafficking with measures such as the production and broadcasting of radio and television messages to raise public awareness of trafficking and sexual exploitation of women (GRETA, 2011). So far, the only reference of the NMWR and their action plan was in the GRETA report.

Moreover, the Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is collaborating with Interpol and Europol. For example, in 2009 Cyprus was involved in 42 investigations that concerned international trafficking and it collaborated with Europol and Interpol for six of them (US Department of State, 2009).

## 3.5 Programmes and services for tackling and preventing women trafficking for sexual exploitation and for supporting the victims

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which was created by the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group Against Trafficking in Persons, under the Ministry of Interior, outlines all the services that are involved in tackling trafficking and protecting the victims and each one's responsibilities according to the law N.60(I)/2014. Its purpose is mostly to ensure the respect of victims of trafficking human rights through a coordinated collaboration between all the involved organisations and services (Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Persons, 2016). These services are both government and non-government as they are

presented further down. However, there are a couple more NGOs that are not included in the NRM but are included in this chapter.

### 3.5.1 Government Services

The Cyprus government services involved in tackling trafficking in women and protecting the victims are: Ministry of Interior (MI), Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD), Police - Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OCTHB), Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance - Social Welfare Services (SWS), Legal Services of the Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### 3.5.1.1    Ministry of Interior

The MI has the general coordination of all the services and promotes actions towards combating trafficking in persons. According to the law N.60(I)/2014, the National Coordinator of the MCGATIP is the Minister of Interior who is, inter alia, responsible for the calling of regular or irregular meetings with the MCGATIP or with other Ministers and General Directors of Ministries, representing the MCGATIP in the cabinet and submitting the annual report and the national action plan for discussion and decision making.

#### 3.5.1.2    Civil Registry and Migration Department

The Civil Registry and Migration Department[7] (CRMD), according to law N.60(I)/2014, is the government authority which is responsible for granting Entry Permits and Temporary and Permanent Residence Permits to European Union nationals and aliens. It is also the competent Department for determining the Cypriot Citizenship. Among other things, the CRMD is

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[7] The information about the Civil Registry and Migration Department was retrieved on 20.10.2011 by the official webpage of 'The Citizen's Charter:

http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/moi/citizenscharter/citizenscharter.nsf/dmlprologue_en/dmlprologue_en?OpenDocument#

one of the authorities responsible for the collection of data concerning human trafficking along with the police and the Social Welfare Services.

### 3.5.1.3      Police - Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (Anti-Trafficking Unit)

In 2004, the Office for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, with Police Lieutenant Rita Superman as the leading person, was established by the Police in order to coordinate actions against trafficking and to collaborate with international police departments. The Office is the only authority responsible for the identification of victims of trafficking in Cyprus. It used to refer to a manual borrowed from Interpol however the OCTHB drafted its own manual for the identification of trafficking victims (Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group Against Trafficking in Persons, 2016). According to E-notes (2008-2009), the first manual from Interpol did not circulate within the Police as official guidelines for victim identifications until the new manual was drafted where all the police officers, from all districts, went through training. The work of the specific office was recognised by the Department of State in 2016 where Lieutenant Superman was awarded with the title: "2016 Trafficking in Persons Hero" by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Kerry.

Regarding the victims of trafficking, after they are identified as victims, they are granted with a reflection and recovery period of one month, with the right of renewal, in order to decide whether to cooperate with the authorities against their traffickers. If they do decide to cooperate, then, according to the law, they are entitled to police protection, financial and psychological support, medical treatment, public allowances, employment as European citizens, free legal aid, free interpretation services and participation in government vocational programmes (E-notes, 2008-2009; Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group Against Trafficking in Persons, 2016). Furthermore, if the victims are willing to collaborate, then they have the right to get protection under the provisions of the 'Protection of Witnesses Law of 2001 (L.95(I)/01) and have the trial with closed doors and anonymity where

afterwards the victims can enter the 'Witnesses and Justice Co-operators Protection Program' (E-notes, 2008-2009). So far, none of the victims have taken advantage of the aforementioned measures, raising questions to whether they are informed about them or whether there are other undetected reasons.

The police has also participated in a Common European Police Operation called "BLUE AMBER" where all the EU member states were involved to collaborate in informing one another about any human trafficking movements and information so that they could expose a whole criminal circuit (Cyprus Police Annual Report, 2015).

### 3.5.1.4  Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance – Social Welfare Services

Social Welfare Services (SWS) are one of the three authorities (along with the Police and the Civil Registry and Migration Department) that are responsible for collecting data on human trafficking. However, their main role is limited to financial and psychological support. The social welfare officers collaborate with the police when victims of trafficking search for help, by making sure that they know their rights and placing them in the government shelter for a month (if they have no other place to stay) until they find an apartment to live on their own (E-notes, 2008-2009). The SWS act as the legal guardian of the victims as long as they are under the protection of the shelter. The support the SWS give to the victims after they leave the shelter is not reported and it is not very clear in the law either. When the victims are placed in the shelter the social workers, in accordance with the law, have to offer support aiming towards their reinstitution. They are also responsible for referring and escorting the victims to the state medical services, labour office, the welfare benefits management service, the Civil Registry and Migration department, to possible residence places etc. Furthermore, the shelter, which is under the supervision and inspection of the SWS, should offer the victims opportunities for entertainment that include music, cooking lessons, board-

games and internet access (Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Persons, 2016).

### 3.5.1.5        Legal Services of the Republic of Cyprus

The legal service is responsible for investigating and getting directions on whether the case file that was sent to them by the police has adequate testimony for prosecution or any other directions for further handling of the case. It is also responsible for deciding whether a person is eligible for the witness protection plan under the provisions of the 'Protection of Witnesses Law of 2001 (L.95(I)/01).

### 3.5.1.6        National Machinery for Women's Rights[8]

The National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR) is under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and its aim is to promote gender equality in Cyprus. It also "advises the Council of Ministers on policies, programmes and laws promoting women's rights, monitors, coordinates and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of these programmes and laws, carries out information, education and training programmes on relevant issues, contributes to the mobilisation and sensitisation of the public sector of equality issues and serves as a cooperation channel between the government and women's organisations and NGOs working on gender equality and women's rights".

### 3.5.1.7        Ministry of Health

All victims of trafficking, according to the article 47(1) of the L.60(I)/2014, have the right to physical, psychological and social rehabilitation, regardless of their citizenship or whether they possess identity documents and provided they do not have sufficient resources. They also have the right to free emergency medical care and necessary healthcare. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health makes sure that any other special need is taken care of such as issues with pregnancies, disabilities and infirmities,

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[8] The information was gleaned from: http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/structures/cyprus/national-machinery-womens-rights-ministry-justice-and-public-order

mental or psychological disorders, or severe forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. In addition, the Ministry of Health is also responsible for preparing a risk assessment from both the medical services and the mental health services if it is asked of them from the Ministry of Interior for the purposes of repatriation or granting a temporary residence permit to the victims.

### 3.5.1.8      Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The only responsibility the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, regarding the trafficking situation, is providing information material to citizens of developing countries who show interest in coming to Cyprus, concerning the terms and conditions of legal migration in the Republic of Cyprus and the dangers that are included in illegal migration and most importantly trafficking in human beings. The Ministry also helps in communicating with the Diplomatic Authority of the country in case a victim needs to issue travel or other types of documents related to their identification or repatriation.

### 3.5.2   Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

Non-government organisations (NGOs) play a significant role in the protection of the victims of trafficking but also for social and psychological counselling, moral support, help with housing, and skills training etc. The main NGOs that are included in the National Referral Mechanism are: KISA (Action for Equality, Support and Anti-Racism), Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS), Cyprus Stop Trafficking, and STIGMA. However, Caritas Cyprus is another one that helps immigrants in general, but also collaborates with Cyprus Stop Trafficking by helping in trafficking cases. INDEX Research and Dialogue is another one that helps through research and various feministic and socio-structural political oppositions to tackle women and girls human trafficking and human trafficking in general. There

are also smaller ones that have appeared in the last couple of years such as the 'Wellspring' and 'Room of Hope'. The Wellspring offers shelter to victims of trafficking and the Room of Hope offers various skills training and entertainment and psychological support.

### 3.5.2.1 KISA – Action for Equality, Support and Anti-Racism

KISA is an organisation that envisions a multicultural society with no racism, xenophobia or discrimination, but a society of equality through the interaction and mutual respect. Its actions focus on migration, asylum, racism and discrimination, human trafficking and human rights and they include social interventions, awareness campaigns and political pressure aiming to bring political change. KISA runs a centre for migrants and refugees, which offers free information, support, legal support and mediation services to immigrants, refugees and victims of trafficking, racism/discrimination and ethnic minorities.

### 3.5.2.2 MIGS - Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

MIGS is an NGO which promotes gender equality through programmes of social, political and economic nature within the Mediterranean area. Its contribution is seen through the use and combination of research, lobbying and the implementation of educational workshops, conferences and other actions. MIGS is closely related to the University of Nicosia and it participates in many European projects in collaboration with academic institutions and their NGOs in Cyprus and other European countries. It operates through a series of thematic areas such as violence against women including prostitution, trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, gender and migration, equal representation of women and men in decision making in work and financial sectors.

### 3.5.2.3    Cyprus Stop Trafficking (CST)

Cyprus Stop Trafficking was formed on a voluntary base in 2007 in collaboration with a Swiss Organisation called ACEES. Its main purpose is to provide every possible help to identified victims of trafficking whether it is financial, medical, psychological etc. The organisation collaborates closely with the police and the OCTHB, the SWS, other government services and also with other NGOs. In addition, since 2009 it has been conducting a campaign providing information on human trafficking so that people can understand the difference between sex trafficking and prostitution. It collaborates with a radio station called ASTRA and with a weekly newspaper called GNOMI. Within the context of this campaign, they have gained access to the Ministry of Defence and visited dozens of army camps throughout Cyprus.

### 3.5.2.4    STIGMA

STIGMA provides support and protection to victims of sexual abuse and it offers counselling, legal support, psychological support, escort to the police for testimony, job search, help to prepare for their testimony in court as well as escorting them, preparation for conscious repatriation, financial support for repatriation, financial support for covering basic needs on their return back to their countries and collaboration with other organisations for supporting the victims.

### 3.5.2.5    Future World Centre

Future World Centre is a non-profit organisation that uses a horizontal entrepreneurial management model. Their work "harnesses the power of emerging new technologies and the science of structured democratic dialogue in order to accelerate positive social change"[9]. It designs and implements projects that not only promote the culture of peace and reconciliation in Cyprus but also the region and the globe. It is also an active promoter of the Millennium Development Goals within Europe and Sub-Saharan countries. Its Humanitarian Affairs Unit is the one which is

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[9] Derived from: http://www.futureworldscenter.org

closely related to human trafficking issues but mostly through its own Unit of Rehabilitation of Victims of

Torture. They provide psychological, social and legal support to the victims with a qualified social worker, therapists and lawyers[10].

### 3.5.2.6      Wellspring – Room of Hope[11]

Wellspring is a non-profit-making association and its headquarters are based in Limassol. The association's work is focused on the support and restoration of individuals dealing with crises in their lives or are in vulnerable/at risk situations such as prostitution, human trafficking and any other abusive situations. It is a Christian association which mostly depends on volunteers and donations by individuals, organisations and churches in Cyprus and abroad. 'Room of Hope' is a project under Wellspring in collaboration with the Finish organisation 'Free a victim'. The project is based in Nicosia and offers psychosocial support and working skills training in the form of various handcraft projects for survivors of human trafficking, asylum seekers, refugees and women from other vulnerable conditions in the form of groups. They may also plan other types of activities and all their efforts aim to help the women find themselves again and be able to develop their potentials and reintegrate into society effectively.

## 3.6     Social work practice

Social work practice in Cyprus, regarding trafficking of women for commercial sex or any form of trafficking for that matter, is absent and there is no literature available for it. The monopoly of social work practice lies within the responsibilities of the social workers of the Social Welfare Services that are mentioned in point 3.5.1.4, but without any specialisation on the issue. Of the NGOs that are involved in human trafficking issues, only one (Future World Centre) has a qualified social worker working with victims of trafficking.

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[10] Derived from: www.futureworldcenter.org
[11] The information was gleaned from: www.wellspringcyprus.com

## 3.7    Conclusion

Cyprus is a country of destination for human trafficking and is also considered a high-risk country for women trafficking for sexual exploitation since the latter is linked mainly to prostitution which is not illegal, as such, and is culturally tolerated. According to the Protection Project (2003), prostitution used to bring to the island an income of more than 59 million euro, but this is an amount which one can doubt since profits from prostitution are illegal. There were 108 registered cabarets in Cyprus in 2002, a big number for a small country but with the new law and new policies, the number of registered cabarets has decreased dramatically (MIGS Report, 2007). However, cabarets are not the source of the problem since it seems that the demand for sex has not stopped because of the closing down of cabarets but instead prostitution, which is linked to sex trafficking, has moved to other venues harder to be located by the police.

Even though Cyprus is now on Tier 1, meaning that it is more prepared now to tackle the problem more effectively, the government should still take more aggressive measures by collaborating with other countries, implementing good practices and better collaborating with the existing NGOs and encouraging the creation of new ones for the better and more effective help and protection of victims of trafficking.

Cyprus is an independent Greek island, with its own government and consequently with its own policies and legislations, in the middle of three continents which, through the centuries and up to today, has made it the perfect link for trades of all sorts. The government is faced with various serious political issues having the 'Cyprus problem' as its priority, fearing for any war threats, plus the financial crisis which means that any type of trading that would bring income to the island is welcome. However, the government of Cyprus recognises the severity of the human trafficking problem and it is making efforts to tackle it by trying to follow Europe, USA and United Nations' advice through collaboration with their various projects and units. But, the government of Cyprus for some reason is lagging in its

actions to combat human trafficking even though its NAP is surfacing different aspects of tackling actions. In addition, there is a paucity of arrests and convictions of trafficking offenders and insufficient support of victims. Lastly, the social work practice is restricted to the responsibilities of the Social Welfare Services' officers. There is no specialisation on trafficking of women for commercial sex or any other form of human trafficking and also social work practice is limited to the work of three NGOs where only one of which has a qualified social worker.

# CHAPTER 4: THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES

## 4.1 Introduction

Globalisation has brought both positive and negative social and economic influences. The need for international social policies regarding THB is now greater than ever before. This chapter aims to explore the extant literature regarding policies within a European and international context and social work practices on THB and more specifically on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. By exploring the literature on policies and practices, the researcher will be able to compare the findings of her research to it. More precisely this chapter presents: the historical development of policy on trafficking, examples of different countries, a comparative analysis (comparing and contrasting countries' successes), and the literature on international social work and good social work practices.

## 4.2 Policies for tackling trafficking of women for sexual exploitation

Policies, on a European and international level, are imperative for a well-coordinated effort to tackle women trafficking for sexual exploitation (TIP Report, 2016). There are four elements in this section concerning policies: the main policy actions which will be described in a chronological order, the policy approaches and strategies, the effect of media on policy formation, and recommendations for improvement of social policies.

### 4.2.1 Review of the main policies

There are various efforts that countries around the world have made to try and combat all forms of slavery of human beings over the years. Nevertheless, slavery of human beings has been transforming and taking

new, more modern forms, such as labour and sex trafficking (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). In this section, the historical development of policies to combat slavery and human trafficking will be illustrated chronologically aiming to portray the flow of policy evolution and facilitate a better understanding of the policies existing today.

The first international law on slavery came through the Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery of 1926 (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). However, no implementation took place. Then, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which did not have any enforcement clause, and in 1956, they passed two supplementary conventions: "'The Supplementary Conventions on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery' and [one covenant:] 'The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights'" (Lusk & Lucas, 2009, 53). Through the two conventions, the states are obligated to abolish slavery and any "servile status, which includes debt bondage, serfdom, bride price, transfer of women as property, and inheritance of a woman through death" (Lusk & Lucas, 2009, 53). The covenant was enacted in 1965 and it "stipulates the 'right to work through free choice'". Albeit the covenants lacked enforcement, they all helped in shaping "the legal framework for slavery in its more modern form" (Lusk & Lucas, 2009, 53).

From this point on, the attention was drawn more to the new forms of slavery such as servitude for sex and sex trafficking. Sweden's Social Worker's Association took an initiative in 1981, to submit a report which was included in their government's commissioned report of that year, concerning the necessity of a law against purchasers of sex (Waltman, 2011). This initiative was the beginning of an international debate concerning the conflation of prostitution and sex trafficking. They contended that such a law would "improve equality between the sexes and prevent undue exploitation of socially deprived women" (Waltman, 2011, 450). It was because of this first reaction from the social workers that the idea of

penalising the demand was introduced and included as an agenda item in the Parliament meetings from 1992 in Sweden which finalised and passed the Sex Purchase Act in 1999 (Waltman, 2011).

Later in 1998, the first International Criminal Court (ICC) was established and today consists of 124 member states[12]. This "court has jurisdiction only over genocide and crimes against humanity" which includes: (a) torture and persecution – "sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and enforced sterilization or pregnancy"; (b) war crimes – "medical experimentation, genocide, torture, hostage-taking, and attacks on civilians"; and (c) war crimes – sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, sexual violence, unlawful conscription, and the conscription of children" (Lusk & Lucas, 2009, 53). However, the ICC is only used as a 'last resort', therefore it has rarely been used. The ICC will hear and prosecute crimes, concerning the aforementioned grave categories, that were not undertaken by the courts within the member states (ibid).

In 2000, the United States passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) which "authorized the establishment of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to assist in the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts"[13].

In the same year, the Protocol to Prevent, Supress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children was enacted by the United Nations to supplement the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (United Nations, 2000). The Protocol, which is also referred to as the 'Palermo Protocol'[14], was the first attempt to legally bind all nations towards a more unified and coordinated approach to tackling human trafficking (Hodge, 2014) and its purpose is to prevent and tackle HT, to protect and assist victims of trafficking and to promote cooperation amongst the state

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[12] Derived from: https://www.icc-cpi.int
[13] Derived from: https://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/
[14] A more in depth details about the Palermo Protocol are included in Chapter 2.

parties (United Nations, 2000). The Protocol has also provided the state parties with the first agreed-on definition of human trafficking which defines trafficking in persons as the:

> Transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position of vulnerability or giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nations, 2000, article 3(a), 2).

Albeit the Palermo Protocol was ratified by [15]117 countries, "the success of HT policies worldwide is largely dependent upon the actual implementation within each nation" (Ross-Sheriff & Orme, 2015, 7).

The extent to which the Protocol has been implemented has been monitored by the US State Department specifically the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons, which published the first Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report in 2001. The TIP Reports are the most accepted form of information on each country around the world and their efforts to combat HT and protect the victims. The TIP Report of 2001 included the reports of 82 countries and this reached 187 by the year 2016 (TIP Report, 2017). According to the TIP report of 2017, 36 countries out of the 187 fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking which places them in Tier 1 (Tier ranking is explained in chapter 3). 80 countries placed in Tier 2, meaning that they do not fully meet the minimum standards but they are making significant efforts to get to that level. 45 countries are placed in Tier 2 Watch List which means that they have shown some improvement and that they have committed themselves to

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[15] Gleaned from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's website. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/signatures.html> [Accessed 1 August 2017].

taking additional steps over the next year to bring themselves into compliance with the minimum standards. 23 countries are placed in Tier 3 which means that they are not making any significant efforts to meet the minimum TVPA standards. Therefore, according to the TIP report of 2017, 62% of the countries that took part in the TIP report, are at least making significant efforts to eliminate trafficking. These 187 countries are scattered around the globe: Africa, East Asia & Pacific, Europe, Near East, South & Central Asia and Western Hemisphere. The fact that 62% of the countries have met the minimum standards of eliminating trafficking or at least are making significant efforts to meet them, does not show the extent to which the Protocol is implemented. There are no evaluation tools in order to indicate the degree in which the countries efficiently apply the Protocol's standards.

Furthermore, in 2003, the US federal government passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorisation Act (TVPRA) which "added to the original law a new requirement that foreign governments provide the Department of State with data on trafficking investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences in order to fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking" (TIP, 2016, 15). Through a revision of the TIP Reports from 2000 and on, it was noticed that since 2003 all the countries have provided the Department of State with data concerning prosecution, prevention and protection of state and NGOs' actions. However, the 2003 report concluded that stricter measures were needed concerning border interdiction (passage restriction between two countries or states) therefore training border guards and officials was required in order to identify traffickers and help the people who have been trafficked. The TIP report of 2003, also increased public awareness however it was criticised for not paying attention to the factors that help in fostering environments where trafficking can take place, such as cultures, traditions and other acceptable behaviours. Therefore, the Reauthorisation Act of 2008 was enacted thus creating a database system aiming to "research and study the global patterns and trends of human trafficking" (Nguyen, 2010, 208). The Act of 2008 also focuses more on victims'

identification and offers funds to USA States towards anti-trafficking programs with a provision to offer effective and efficient assistance to victims and have well-trained personnel working with victims (Nguyen, 2010).

Moreover, the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been in function for 40 years. In 2003, it "set up the Office of Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating of Human Beings to help participating States develop and implement effective policies for combating human trafficking" by promoting "a victim-centred and human-rights approach in protecting victims". The OSCE formed an Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings which recommended the '3-Ps' – Prevention of THB, Prosecution of traffickers and Protection of victims which became well-known and used in the formation of social policies by the member states in the years to follow[16]. The '3 Ps' were utilised by countries to report their efforts to eliminate trafficking in the TIP Reports.

Furthermore, the Office of Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating THB (OSR/CTHB) (an OSCE institution) has initiated a new partnership called the 'Alliance against Trafficking in Persons' which has been accepted and acknowledged by all participating states for its efforts for cooperation and synergies amongst the states to fight THB (OSCE & OSR/CTHB, 2015). "The Alliance against Trafficking in Persons is a broad international forum that includes international, non-government and inter-government organisations in joining forces to prevent and combat human trafficking. It helps develop effective joint strategies, combines individual efforts, and provides OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation with innovative and co-ordinated approaches to strengthening the prevention of trafficking in human beings and the fight against it. Every year, the Special Representative holds a high level

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[16] Derived from: http://www.osce.org/combating-human-trafficking

Alliance conference and two meetings of the Alliance Expert Co-ordination Team"[17]. The Alliance's focus of 2017 is 'child trafficking'.

In addition, in 2009, "the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons", which advises the "Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime", recommended that victims of trafficking should not be punished or prosecuted for crimes they did under trafficking situation. The EU and the Council of Europe adopted this and included it under Article 8 of the 2011 Directive (TIP, 2016, 15). This Directive added a few new elements to the international legal framework including the non-punishment and non-prosecution principle of trafficking victims (Article 8). It shifted to a more human rights and victims' protection approach, adding assistance to the victims (including "accommodation, material assistance, medical treatment, psychological assistance, counselling, information, translation and interpretation services") and compensation. It also included protection of victims during criminal investigations and proceedings (Van der Leun & Van Schijndel, 2016, 30; European Parliament and Council of EU, 2011). In addition, "article 19 prescribes the establishment of national rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, which should be independent bodies, in charge of monitoring the implementation of the measures foreseen by the directive" (Van der Leun & Van Schijndel, 2016, 31). Twenty-six member states have notified the European Commission of transposition regarding the Directive of 2011, except Germany and Denmark (Denmark is not bound by the anti-trafficking legislation)[18]. The Commission was asked to assess the measures that each member state has taken to comply with the Directive by the end of 2016, however the Commission failed to meet the deadline and has not yet produced the report.

Finally, in 2013, the OSCE added the fourth 'P' for Partnerships stressing the need for collaboration between the international organisations and other

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[17] Derived from: http://www.osce.org/secretariat/107221
[18] Derived from: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A8-2016-0144+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN

partners for a better and more coordinated effort to combat human trafficking[19]. In addition, in December 2013, OSCE updated with an addendum to its Action Plan, reviewed relevant rules and regulations in regard to personnel and the procurement of goods and services to ensure that no OSCE activities contribute to any form of human trafficking (TIP Report, 2016, 15).

Social policies (protocols, acts, amendments and addendums etc.) have been presented which mainly aim to prevent THB, protect the victims and prosecute the traffickers and are adopted by countries in order to be able to fight THB individually and globally. However, besides the TIP Reports on each country's efforts (which is also ambiguous on whether the data collected is the real representation of HT situation in each country), there is no substantive evidence that all these social policies are effective and efficient.

### 4.2.2  Policy approaches and strategies

**"**Policy regarding sex trafficking remains controversial due to discord regarding the varying approaches toward the regulation of the commercial sex industry" (Ross-Sheriff & Orme, 2015, 7). On the one hand, sex worker advocates contend that sex workers have the right to work and that by criminalising prostitution is a violation of that right. They also ascertain the need for prostitution to be legal in order to improve the health services for sex workers and enhance their safety (Berger, 2012). On the other hand, the abolitionist approach predicates that there should be no distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution and that trafficking could occur either way (Berger, 2012). There is a conflation of sex trafficking with prostitution and a predication by the abolitionists that if prostitution is prohibited by making it illegal and by criminalising the purchase of sex, then sex trafficking will cease to exist (Berger, 2012). However, the pro-work and human rights advocates do not support this position since they believe that not all victims are prostitutes nor have all prostitutes been trafficked

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[19] Derived from: http://www.osce.org/combating-human-trafficking

(Berger, 2012).

In a study, conducted by Marinova & James (2012) in 2009 which included 100 countries, it was found that four in ten prohibited prostitution (meaning that prostitution is illegal and prostitutes get a penalty), half tolerated prostitution or legalised it, and the remainder had limited legality towards it – some countries have an abolitionist regime. This study highlights the discord and confusion that exists about prostitution and its consequences as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

There are a few examples that clearly portray the complex manifestation of sex trafficking through the implementation of both pro-work advocates and abolitionist approaches towards prostitution. The Netherlands and Germany have both legalised sex work, in 2000 and 2002 respectively. In the Netherlands, HT increased due to lack of law enforcement and police officers hence the investigations were not enough in comparison to the rapid increase of prostitutes. In Germany, despite the increase of prostitutes the first year the law was implemented, its law enforcement was strong and rigorous and the police methods and investigation were consistent and successful. Because of the successful German police work, the number of HT incidents decreased over the years (Marinova & James, 2012).

In the United Kingdom (UK), there is a debate between the pro-work advocates and abolitionists. Buying and selling sex is legal in the UK but soliciting and 'kerb-crawling' – meaning to search and pick up a sex worker in a car – are illegal (Berger, 2012). In addition, the Policing and Crime Bill of 2009 made the payment for services from a prostitute, that had been coerced and threatened by a third party, illegal whether the customer knew it or not (ibid). The English government believes that trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in the UK has increased and it is fuelling the market for prostitution which are both now taking place everywhere, including work on the street, flats, brothels, massage parlours etc. (The Crown Prosecution

Service). [20]The Crown Prosecution Service of the English government has drafted a legal guidance for prosecutors and paralegal staff for guiding and assisting them in making decisions in their cases. It also provides opportunities to prostitutes, who have been arrested for soliciting and loitering, by rehabilitating them in other routes out of prostitution.

Furthermore, Sweden (1999) and Norway (2008) adopted an abolitionist approach (Marinova & James, 2012). Sweden passed the Sex Purchase Act in 1999 which criminalised the sex buyers (clients) and decriminalised the selling of sex (prostitutes). It also included the pledge of money and assistance to women victims of violence and prostitutes (Berger, 2012). As an abolitionist country, Sweden considers the purchase of sexual services as violence against women and the offenders are fined and sentenced to up to six months in prison (Marinova & James, 2012). When the Law was first passed in 1999, it was ground-breaking but since then a lot of other countries have adopted the Swedish model. Some qualitative evidence in Sweden has shown that by applying an abolitionist approach, the demand for sex services decreases (ibid). However, Sweden's law included an approach which aimed to not just punish the buyers of sex but to educate and inform them and all its citizens about HT through educational programs and awareness campaigns (ibid). In addition, since the implementation of the law, Sweden has "commissioned the National Criminal Investigation Department of the National Police to survey and eradicate trafficking of women" and later on to human trafficking in general (OHCHR, 2005, 4, cited in Marinova & James, 2012, 237).

Nevertheless, researchers have discordant views about the ostensibly successful legislation in Sweden (Berger, 2012). There are studies that tout the law's success by reducing the number of prostitutes and decreasing sex trafficking and they even claim that the law helped prostitutes to leave sex work or stopped them from getting into prostitution (ibid). Other studies

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[20] Derived from the formal website of The Crown Prosecution Service:
http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/prostitution_and_exploitation_of_prostitution/

though, predicate that the methodology which was used by the studies that praise the law, had flaws and were not objective. In reality, the law had a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of sex workers and it drove their business even further underground making them even more vulnerable (ibid). In the end, this debate whether the Swedish model is successful or not reflects on the same debate and discord that the pro-work advocates and abolitionists have.

In Norway, the purchase of sex became illegal in 2009. The law aimed to make people more negative towards the purchase of sex. According Kotsadam and Jakobsson's study (2011) who explored whether the law was successful, found out that Norwegians who lived in the capital (Oslo) where prostitution was more visible and trusted the politicians, were more prone to change their behaviour towards prostitution and start believing that it should be illegal to buy sex. However, their belief that selling sex should be illegal was stronger than their belief that buying sex should be illegal. Kotsadam & Jakobsson (2011, 110) argue that laws could affect attitudes of people, nevertheless "knowledge in this area is still sparse" which makes it even harder for politicians to form laws that could effectively tackle trafficking of women and HT in general.

Based on the limited data available, other countries such as Belgium, Greece and Switzerland, which have legalised brothels, indicate that legality of prostitution causes an increase in trafficking (Marinova & James, 2012). According to Marinova & James (2012), trafficking convictions for progress come from those few countries that undertake such initiatives as Sweden and Norway.

However, discussion on supply and demand (prostitution and purchasers of sex) appears to be oversimplified. According to human rights advocates, it is more complex than the abolitionists believe. The women who fall into trafficking situations are pushed into them by poverty, unemployment, inequality, discrimination hence they might migrate voluntary but be

trafficked involuntarily or both thus leading them to abusive work environments (Berger, 2012). For this reason, the argument is that by abolishing prostitution or ending the demand will not save these women from already dire living situations nor will it end their hope of migrating to a better life (ibid). Furthermore, the human rights advocates also argue that the demand factors are complex since they contend that if sex work is criminalised aiming to decrease demand, it also enables the creation of a stronger underground market for trafficking (ibid).

Russo & Immordino's study (2015), has considered the effects of policy changes on the quantity in prostitution. They found that prohibition of prostitution is more effective than the legal and unregulated prostitution where government refrains from intervention (e.g. Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Israel, Costa Rica and Canada) as far as quantity reduction is concerned, but it is less effective in reducing harm. Moreover, they found that quantity is also reduced when a prohibition regime makes the purchase of sex illegal but not the selling of sex and not vice versa. Nevertheless, "the higher the stigma and the higher the probability that the sex workers will face violence, the lower the gains that a prohibition regime can achieve" (Russo & Immordino, 2015, 24).

Another interesting find, that Russo & Immordino (2015) highlight in their study, is the taxation of prostitution which effectively decreases the quantity but does not reduce harm. They contend that a lot of prostitutes will work illegally otherwise they would have to raise their price in order to pay for the taxes thus putting them in greater danger of facing violence as well. Russo & Immordino (2015) carry on and argue that a licensing system is not an effective policy either since it could possibly create an illegal market especially if it is a strict system.

Albeit legalisation of prostitution while controlled under a managed zone can reduce harm for sex workers, Cho et al. (2013) concluded that legalised prostitution increases THB. They looked at quantitative empirical data of 150 countries and found that "the scale effect of legalising

prostitution leads to an expansion of the prostitution market and thus an increase in human trafficking, while the substitution effect reduces demand for trafficked prostitutes by favouring prostitutes who have legal residence in a country" (Cho et al., 2013, 75). Consequently, their analysis depicts the domination of the scale effect over the substitution effect, therefore coming to the conclusion that legalisation of prostitution increases THB.

### 4.2.3  The effect of media on policy formation

"Problems defined as crimes have numerous ready-made solutions—there are perpetrators to identify and arrest, victims to rescue and restore, and justice that can be served. Defining problems as crimes also diverts attention away from social conditions such as inequality, poverty, or racism that are more difficult to solve" (Beckett, 1999, cited in Farrell & Fahy, 2009, 618).

A problem which is portrayed by the media can strongly affect the way the public will interpret it and how the policymakers will respond to it especially when the problem is considered criminal (Farrell & Fahy, 2009). If the media is the basic source of information for most people, then it can be used as "a vehicle for anti-trafficking stakeholders to convey messages to the public and legitimise particular problem frames. As a result, media representations of human trafficking problems, both in response to and in furtherance of claims makers at different stages, illustrate publicly accepted definitions of and solutions to the problem" (Farrell & Fahy, 2009, 618).

Farrell & Fahy (2009) conducted a study concerning the depiction of HT through newspaper articles. They used 2,462 articles from US newspapers. There were three main frames that emerged from the analysis of the articles: "human rights frame, a crime and criminalisation frame and national security frame" (Farrell & Fahy, 2009, 618). For example, the national security frame emerged because of the public's fears about immigration. Farrell & Fahy (2009) argue that all forms of media have an influenced comprehension of human trafficking problem since media

representations of it are reflections of specific stakeholders' claims about the nature of the problem.

In addition, the media has the power to use the stories and narratives of traumatic experiences from trafficked persons and sensitise the general public and the policy makers (Stolz, 2007 cited in Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). However, the focus of the media seldom exposes the viewers to a narrative of HT which considers "the economic, political, and social consequences of globalisation" (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012, 146). "Most of the narratives did not discuss the structural factors that increased an individual's risk of being trafficked and presented stereotyped depictions of the victims to promote the symbols and agenda of a moral crusade" (ibid). This is an error which the study in hand evades and rectifies.

In conclusion, the media is powerful and can be used by policy makers to draw the attention away from the long-discussed debate about sex workers and sex trafficking and rather point out that attention must be paid on more effective prevention methods, improved protection policies through better programmes/services and attitudes towards the victims and finally on more efficient methods of prosecuting the traffickers. Hence, the 3Ps should be used and implemented more efficiently.

### 4.2.4  Recommendations for improvement of policies

According to Marinova & Jame's study (2012), which examined and compared the policies of three countries located in the same geographical region – Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands, a strong and consistent anti-trafficking legal framework and law enforcement seem to be the best methods to tackle human trafficking. In addition, Marinova & James (2012) contend that one of the reasons people might be at risk of becoming victims of trafficking is the search for a better job abroad. They argue that economic opportunities should be created aiming to help people find jobs in their own countries avoiding, in this sense, the need to seek jobs abroad and place themselves in vulnerable situations where they could fall into the

hands of traffickers. Whether prostitution is legalised or outlawed does not eliminate the phenomenon of sex trafficking (ibid).

Van der Leun & Van Schijndel (2016) in the Netherlands, found that anti-THB policies and migration control, albeit interrelated, mostly follow their own course since the adoption of the Palermo Protocol. They predicate that THB will have better chances to be reduced if the THB policy apparatus and migration control policy apparatus collaborate and form better and complementary policies and legislations.

A suggestion that can be included in the prevention policies is mentioned by Ross-Sheriff & Orme (2015), aiming to reduce the vulnerability of persons to HT by strengthening the family unity in the countries of origin. They contend that family unity can be strengthened through the improvement of financial support measures for the impoverished, education, better and more accessible health systems and through religious / faith-based support systems. By improving family bonds, the potential victims would be prevented from turning to the "HT businesses for income or personal pleasure" (ibid). Ross-Sheriff & Orme (2015) also suggest the formation of culturally sensitive campaigns that would target impoverished communities and rural areas and that faith-based communities could at least educate their members about traffickers' tactics thus helping to reduce the risk of THB for their members. These types of policies could be appointed to social workers' jurisdiction since they concern the welfare of individuals and families.

## 4.3    Policies in assisting and protecting the victims of trafficking

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2007, 57), "all assistance and protection efforts should strive towards the restoration of the victims' rights and the prevention of further violations. Human rights underpin all aspects of humanitarian work." HT is a violation of human rights; therefore, social policies should aim to protect the victims and restore their rights.

The EU Directive 2011/36/EU took a step further in the protection of the victims' rights and added new elements such as the protection of victims, during the investigations and proceedings, by their traffickers but also by the police proceedings aiming to avoid secondary victimisation, victim assistance (concerning inter alia accommodation, psychological support, medical treatment etc.) and compensation.

Moreover, article 14 of the Trafficking Protocol stipulates that "Nothing in this [Trafficking] Protocol shall affect the rights, obligations and responsibilities of States and individuals under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law and, in particular where applicable, the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and the principle of non-refoulement as contained therein" (IOM, 2007, 69). The principle of non-refoulement has acquired a status of customary international law where it binds all States to respect and abide by it. This principle protects the victims of trafficking from being forced to return to their country of origin if their life or liberty is at risk (ibid.).

All the member states of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (both adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2003) must ensure that trafficked persons are aware of the right to financial compensation. The right to financial compensation is strengthened under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (adopted in 2005 and entered into force in 2008) where trafficking victims can "claim compensation for both moral and material damages from the trafficker" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008, 19).

The "Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power and European Union Law such as the EU Council Directive on Compensation of Crime Victims" support the victims by helping them

receive compensation by their traffickers and the state even though, the compensation by the state is limited to "material damages in cases where the offence was an intentional crime of violence resulting in physical or mental injury" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008, 20). However, according to the OSCE/ODIHR (2008), in practice, it is very rare for a trafficked person to receive a compensation payment. Trafficked victims may not seek compensation because most of them are foreigners in the country and do not know their rights or are too scared of their traffickers and do not want to go against them. They also do not know how to access justice or other relative mechanisms (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008).

EU Directive of 2011 also protects the victims from secondary victimisation during the criminal investigations and proceedings.

## 4.4    Examples of good practices of policy actions in other countries

Some countries in Europe have established schemes for compensations to the victims by the state. For example, victims of violent crimes are compensated in France, Romania, Ukraine and the UK (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008). These schemes are state funded or subsidised, guarantee payment of compensation to the victims, and can even make it possible for an interim or urgent payment (ibid). Other such schemes allow the state to sue the defendant on behalf of the victim for reimbursement (e.g. France and Ukraine) where a police report and the willingness of the victim to help the police with the investigation is enough to sue the defendant (ibid). Other examples of good practice are described below including examples from: The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, France and the United States. Most of the information was derived from the TIP Report 2016.

Most of the aforesaid countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and France, have invested money in awareness campaigns, training of people working in state services, immigration, hotels, aviation, customs, labour inspection staff, troops and diplomatic personnel, taxis, restaurant staff, and

learning how to detect victims of trafficking in their workplace (TIP Report, 2016). Furthermore, the Netherlands enacted a law in 2015, the 'Tackling Fake Firms Act' where the government is able to "prosecute fraudulent companies used by traffickers and recruiters to circumvent labour laws" and it has also created a website called "Road Map Human Trafficking" (it was uploaded in 2015), where victims, professionals and generally citizens could find and learn about organisations that help the victims of human trafficking by region and specialisation (TIP Report, 2016, 284).

Moreover, Sweden has taken the lead in many regional and international endeavours since the beginning of its efforts to tackle sex trafficking and human trafficking such as sponsoring projects, campaigns and conferences in collaboration with other regions and countries by spending millions of euros over the years (Marinova & James, 2012). According to Marinova & Jame's findings (2012), the success for affecting the sex trafficking market lies in how well informed the citizens are as well as the rigorous police work and the well-applied methods they use (ibid).

As far as the USA is concerned, a multi-tactic method was applied towards an End Demand approach which could have had the potentials for positive results; however, there was not enough empirical data to envisage their success. The most common tactic was the creation of '*John schools*' that first functioned in 1995 in San Francisco and then used by over 40 cities in the US and in other countries including Canada and the UK (Berger, 2012, 551). This program targets offenders that were arrested for the first time for soliciting a prostitute and included a series of classes aiming to educate them about the health and legal consequences of buying sex and about trafficking through a victim's horrific experience (ibid). Another End Demand tactic concerns the release of the offenders' names through the media outlets and through the local newspaper or billboards so that all the people who know the offenders will know what they did. A further tactic is the use of 'Dear John' letters. Letters are sent to the car owners who cruise known prostitution areas warning them about the dangers of prostitution (Berger, 2012). Related to this tactic is the tactic of seizing the cars that are found

cruising in known prostitution areas and giving them geographical restraining orders from entering those areas (ibid).

## 4.5   Social work theory and research

Social work, as a profession, stands on principles that promote human rights, social and economic justice and everything that involves interventions, on micro, mezzo and macro level, for the wellbeing of the individuals, groups and community/society[21]. According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the global definition of social work is:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and  the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

Based on the global definition, it would have been expected for social work to play a pivotal role in contributing to scholarly literature concerning human trafficking which would effectively influence the political apparatus focused on tackling it, however the topic has not been discussed adequately in social work (Alvarez and Alessi, 2012; Hodge, 2008). Hodge and Lietz's (2007) review of the social work literature in terms of macro, mezzo and micro levels of intervention, consistent with the IFSW definition. They concluded that the social work profession has "…an active role in ending sexual slavery and assisting victims by using a multilevel ecological approach that emphasizes interventions in the areas of policy, community, and direct practice" (p.172).  A number of other authors have proposed theoretical perspectives which may be employed by social workers in understanding trafficking and developing social work interventions. For

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[21] Derived from IFSW's website: http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work/

example, Alvarez and Alessi (2012) recommend an economic and social justice approach. They contend that social workers should not view human trafficking only from the victims' perspective in the sense of trying to save them from the harrowing situation they are in, but in a more comprehensive way, where human trafficking derives from a "global labour exploitation [which] contributes to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, poor standards of health, and political unrest" (p. 148). "Social workers should acknowledge the structural inequalities that preceded the trafficking as well as the push and pull factors that led many trafficked individuals to leave their countries in search of better living and working conditions" (Alvarez and Alessi, 2012, p. 148).

Taking a wider systemic perspective, Wolf-Branigan (2009) recommended applying complexity theory and illustrated its concepts with reference to an anti-trafficking NGO operating in five countries. Edwards and Mika (2016) similarly highlighted multi-ecological frameworks which assess the persons in the environment and their adaptation abilities for survival and development. They also argued for the importance of a feminist perspective and cited a paper by Iniguez de Heridia (2007) who considered that trafficking will continue as long as gender inequality issues are not addressed. Edwards and Mika's (2016) paper was based on a critical review of the social work literature on trafficking published up to 2013, citing in particular the lack of empirical studies of the phenomenon. They commented that since Hodge and Leitz's (2007) review, "…the state of social work literature has seen minimal progress." (p.4). In this context, Busch-Armendariz et al.'s (2014) research is especially important.

Busch-Armendariz et al.'s (2014) paper reports the only empirical study of victims' experiences of support services and the corresponding perspectives of professionals published to date. They reported findings from a four-year qualitative research study that explored the needs of trafficking survivors who were receiving support from a coalition of service agencies in Texas. The research included interviews and focus groups with 55 victims of trafficking both for sex and labour exploitation over four

different periods (2007, 2009, 2010, 2011) and with service providers and law enforcement participants. The research was done in the USA and it is the first study to examine the strengths and barriers of meeting the needs of adults that have been trafficked and the ways in which these services should be delivered.

Busch-Armendariz et al (2014) reflected on their findings and identified the three social work theories which best explained social work practice implemented with trafficking victims and their restoration. These were: the social work ecological theory, which informed the coordination of services; the use of a strengths-based perspective which underpinned the of building trust amongst professionals and victims; and the cultural competency framework. These are discussed below.

A very important point of Busch-Armendariz et al's (2014) findings, was the significance of the single point-of-contact model which proved to be a milestone of the way the services were coordinated and delivered to the victims. The single point-of-contact was a social worker who was responsible for the collaboration with other professionals and also for the case management of victims. The social worker, through this model, is privy of law enforcement operations and other policy decisions which in this way was able to be more proactive and to take the initiative in innovative strategies and new developments; with the use of this ecological model, the delivery of services was more effective, efficient and consistent. Moreover, Busch-Armendariz et al. (2014) stated that social workers played an important role in building relationships of trust amongst professionals and victims using a strengths-based approach and that this ability and role of social workers should not be underestimated.

Finally, the cultural competence demonstrated by the social workers was one of the components that was defined broadly in the study; not only did it concern the ethnicity and race of the victims but also the knowledge about the crime of human trafficking specifically and its impact on the victims such as "psychological coercion and trauma, cultural practices of survivors and their families, risk factors of vulnerability, etc." (Busch-Armendariz, et al,

2014, 15). The authors caution that their study "…utilized a non-probability convenience sample, and therefore the findings are not intended to be generalizable." (Busch-Armendariz, et al, 2014, 14). Nevertheless, I concur with their claim that, "the findings from this study are significant and break ground with regard to how social work theories and skills are responsive to survivors of this violent crime" (ibid.).

### 4.5.1 Social work pitfalls

Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is a serious social issue as any other trafficking type. The professionals that are called to assist and protect the people who have been trafficked have a very challenging calling. As mentioned before, social workers and every service provider should be educated and trained accordingly and they should also be supervised and supported in their work with such a traumatised population. If they are not appropriately trained, then inevitably all service providers, at some point, will find themselves challenged and at risk of harming others rather than helping them.

Hodge (2008) stated that some service providers may contribute to the invisibility of the victims by focusing on other agendas rather than trying to liberate the victims from their plight. Hodge (2008) gives an example of social workers in the US cutting deals with pimps to disseminate condoms to victims instead of providing them with information that could enable them to escape. By changing the focus of the agenda, service providers, including social workers, could collude with one another to prevent the oppression of the victims. Also, social workers have sworn to protect the vulnerable populations and their protection should be their priority.

Moreover, a 'culture of disbelief' can be formed by the practitioners towards the victims. Pearce (2011) found that case workers may find it hard to believe the stories of children and young adults mainly because they are so horrific or that they have a vivid imagination since their stories were sometimes contradictory, or because of the possibility that they did not want to go home after having received state benefits. Pearce (2011) contends

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that all practitioners should be trained and supported to be able to manage their feelings of horror and despair that these types of cases engender. She denotes that supervision and training is necessary for practitioners in order to be able to listen carefully to such difficult and damaged individuals. Another finding, in Pearce's (2011, p. 1431) study, was the 'hot potato' effect. This effect takes place when practitioners do not want to take responsibility for trafficking victims and they refer them to different agencies. The 'hot potato' effect derives from the incapability of practitioners to handle victims of such serious trauma (ibid). Hence, again, highlighting the need for training and supervision. To avoid such pitfalls, interventions should be planned and implemented with a multidisciplinary approach and not individually by professionals of different disciplines.

Sex trafficking is such a complex problem that a multi-systemic and comprehensive approach needs to be implemented (Hummond & McGlone, 2014). The needs of the survivors are many, and finding appropriate support, which will carry on even after the criminal proceedings are done, is very important to victims to be able to have a successful exit and reintegration. Therefore, the work of social workers with victims of trafficking is challenging, especially when there are inadequate services to care for them. In such cases, they are called to intervene on a policy and practice level for social services (Hummond & McGlone, 2014). For this type of care to be more effective, social workers need to collaborate with the community and other professionals in the various systems. They need to work and be involved in multidisciplinary teams to support and protect the victims of sex trafficking thus creating a network of collaborations that can provide victims with seamless services (Hodge, 2008). In addition, social workers could focus on an interdisciplinary collaboration to combat trafficking always aiming for social justice and advocacy (Ross-Sheriff & Orme, 2015).

## 4.6    Conclusion

International social policies concerning sex trafficking of women have changed through time and have tried to shift from a perpetrator's approach to victim-centred and human rights approach, in this way, focusing more on assuring the protection and restoration of victims. However, even though efforts have been made to make this shift, there is still a long way to go to achieve the protection and restoration of victims.

A study conducted by Cho & Vadlamannati (2012), which derived data from the TIP Reports 2001-2009, found that most of the countries comply mostly of prevention strategies to combat THB and developing countries have shown an improvement in complying with protection policies as well. Interesting enough is the fact that, through their study, they concluded that the Anti-Trafficking Protocol so far has been effective in its prevention policy by ensuring national security via border control and not as much by protecting the victims' human rights and punishing the traffickers.

Albeit there is a shift towards a more human rights approach and victim-centred focus, the results of the policies' success have not yet revealed as much. According to the TIP Reports, almost all countries have limited numbers of traffickers' prosecutions. It is clear that, a perfect system to combat THB does not exist and no country has yet reached the point of eradicating it. Sweden's model is so far, the most comprehensive of all however there is not enough data to actually prove its success. Nonetheless, it appears that criminalisation of the demand for sex along with decriminalisation of the selling of sex and the implementations of various programmes educating the buyers and the general public about THB seems to have had the most effective results in reducing THB.

However, it is time for countries to shift their attention to creating economic opportunities for people offering them a chance to work or be efficiently supported in order to be able to work instead of keep focusing on the debates concerning the conflation between prostitution and sex trafficking

and all the stances related to whether prostitution should be legal or illegal in order to help the reduction of THB. In this way, fewer people may seek to migrate for better opportunities away from their homes thus placing themselves in dangerous and vulnerable situations where traffickers could take advantage of them. Countries should also try to fund programmes and campaigns aiming to strengthen the family and community relationships and bonds so that support comes from within the families and their communities. In this way, individuals form support networks and avoid exposing themselves to dangerous and risky situations where traffickers linger.

In addition, according to the research mentioned above, where police enforcement was strict, consistent and adequate, THB incidents were a lot less showing that with the right methods the police enforcement can have a positive impact on reducing THB. Hence, governments should invest more money in both offering opportunities to their citizens for a better life and also enhancing and improving the numbers and methods of the police force for better handling of the various trafficking systems. Moreover, a better coordination amongst the countries and an improved formation of laws, regarding migration and THB legislations so that they do not contradict but rather complement each other, are imperative in order to effectively tackle THB.

International social work literature suggests that social workers will intervene more effectively if they use theoretical frameworks as tools to intervene and more precisely the ecological approach, the strengths-based perspective and the cultural competence framework, as identified by Busch-Armendariz and colleagues (2014).

Generally, the researcher considers that social workers should get more engaged in national and international social work practice in order to fully understand the politics of human trafficking and find better ways through research to help in the creation of a better national and international

apparatus for tackling the phenomenon.

In conclusion, although researchers, in recent years, have drawn attention to social work's involvement in human trafficking, the literature concerning the profession's role is mostly descriptive (Okech, et al, 2011), Busch-Armendariz et al's study being the notable exception. For this reason, the present study is important and more precisely it is important for Cyprus since it is the first that takes into consideration the voices of the victims in order to compare and examine the services provided to them and to seek the views of professionals and policy makers.

# CHAPTER 5:    METHODOLOGY

## 5.1    Introduction

Human trafficking is a highly-politicised situation. Consequently, key actors who have access to relevant information have their own political agendas which affect the way they are going to use that information. Furthermore, "a substantial number of publications on trafficking for sexual exploitation are influenced by political debates surrounding these topics" (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005, 18). Bearing this in mind, on the one hand and that Cyprus is a small island with a small population on the other, the flow of information on trafficking for sexual exploitation can be perceived as very limited or at the very least, influenced by various political and social agendas. The collection of information for this study was challenging and time consuming and generally the methodology of the research had to be carefully planned and implemented aiming to break through the sensitivity and difficulties of interviewing women identified as having been trafficked and the possible hidden interests or political restrictions the key informant interviewees could have had. In addition, the researcher, after studying the various definitions of THB, has decided to support the Palermo Protocol (which was also adopted by the government of Cyprus) and to analyse her data based on that.

This chapter begins by firstly laying out the research questions and even though they were also presented in chapter one, the researcher decided that it would be helpful if they were included within this chapter as well. It then carries on by presenting the research paradigms. Social constructivism is the theory which the researcher adopts to approach her research. It explains through qualitative research that the way the participants perceive sex trafficking (both women identified as being trafficked and key informants - policy makers and social workers) is socially

constructed. This qualitative work undergirds the various theories and frameworks mentioned in the literature review, concerning the different views and perceptions of what trafficking is and why it is such a propagated phenomenon worldwide. Furthermore, the researcher is using reflexivity to address the ethical considerations related to her field work. The chapter concludes with the description of the research methods and process.

## 5.2    Research questions

This study will explore the following research questions:

- Has trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus been adequately addressed in social policy and social work practice?

    - What are the limitations and strengths of social policies and social work practices in Cyprus?
    - Why are the weaknesses not addressed by the government of Cyprus?
    - Are the needs of victims of trafficking being met in Cyprus?

- How is trafficking of women for sexual exploitation perceived by the government, NGOs and victims?

    - Does the government of Cyprus identify and accept the policy and social work practice limitations and strengths?
    - How do the various government services and NGOs in Cyprus perceive their role and responsibilities in tackling trafficking and protecting the victims?
    - Do the victims of trafficking understand their situation and do they feel they are supported effectively by the government of Cyprus?

- How can the government of Cyprus improve its efforts to tackle trafficking in women for sexual exploitation and protect the victims?

  - Is the government of Cyprus capable of taking action and addressing the policy and social work practice limitations?
  - Are there any impediments that could hinder the government's efforts?
  - Are there any good practices in other countries that can be implemented in Cyprus to tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and support the victims?

## 5.3    Research paradigms

In Cyprus, there is inadequate research concerning the way the policy makers, social workers and NGOs view and define trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. Qualitative methods were implemented in order to explore and understand the participants' views, needs and experiences. The researcher drew on a social constructivist approach paradigm and she also took into consideration her role and participation in the research by reflecting on herself as a researcher.

### 5.3.1  Social constructivism

This study takes on a social constructivist philosophical approach. Even though social constructivism is characterised by an internal diversity and researchers have asserted various theoretical stances towards constructivism (e.g. conventional vs critical, moderate vs radical), constantly debating about their strengths and weaknesses (Kessler, 2016), this study predicates on a combination of epistemological and ontological assumptions. It contends that the world is socially manufactured through human interaction and language, hence society is constructed when people engage and communicate with one another, and our actions are linked to our experiences and our beliefs about ourselves and the world. Also, the way we view the social world and how it shapes our response to it

(Houston, 2001). What is real and what is our knowledge of 'real' is justified by social relativity (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Therefore, realities are socially constructed and created by the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2004).

The inquiry is exploring how the participants of this study have constructed their realities and social meanings relating to their experiences on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. To accomplish that, the researcher is using intersubjectivity in an effort to facilitate communication with the participants and social understanding (Cortina and Liotti, 2010). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111), "The variable and personal (intramental) nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents". Furthermore, the researcher derives and interprets information from the participants by using 'conventional hermeneutical techniques' and 'dialectical interchange' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) imbued by her knowledge and interview techniques as a social worker. In fact, Payne (1997) denoted that "social work is essentially a socially constructed activity" (Houston, 2001, 848). Constructivist inquiry is correlated with social work practice since they share a lot of the same characteristics - "Central to both is an interactive context-bounded attention to dignity, individuality, empowerment, and mutual respect in the relationship between the individual and society" (Rodwell, 1998, 4). Although the participants in this inquiry are not 'clients', they are approached and interviewed using the same techniques, principles and aims (to reveal their socially constructed understanding of the matter under scrutiny).

Upon entering her field work, the researcher exerted knowledge from the theoretical frameworks that portrayed the extant 'realities' or social meanings that other researchers have concluded on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. With a deductive approach, she used these frameworks to understand and better explain the way the participants of her

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inquiry perceive sex trafficking. Trafficking of women has already been explained as a socially / culturally / economically / politically constructed social phenomenon. It is viewed and understood as a profitable business and an organised crime that is linked to gender issues and the economic status of a country, which is affected by the increase of migrant flow because of war crisis and dire conditions in their countries.

### 5.3.2  Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an undeniable feature of qualitative research where "the researcher is a central figure who actively constructs the collection, selection and interpretation of data" (Finlay, 2003, 5). There is a relationship and interaction between the researcher and the participant that cannot be ignored during the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. It can be argued that the same data, handled by two researchers separately, will be presented as two different stories. As Finlay (2003) puts it, "subjectivity in research is transformed from a problem to an opportunity … [so] researchers no longer question the need for reflexivity: the question is 'how to do it'" (p. 5).

Reflexivity is a technique that researchers can manipulate in order to acknowledge in their research the effect their personal experiences and knowledge can have on their results and on the whole approach to their study. If viewed from a psychodynamic approach, reflexivity can be used as an intersubjective reflection where researchers should be aware and should explore how conversation or text is affected by what they themselves bring to it meaning the unconscious needs and transferences that they are exchanging between them and the participants (Finlay, 2003).

Hunt (1989; cited in Finlay, 2003, 10) nicely explicates:

> The inner worlds of researchers structure their choice of setting, experience in the initial stages of fieldwork, and the research roles they assume. The transferences that are situationally mobilised in

the fieldwork encounter have implications for the questions researchers ask, the answers they hear, and the materials they observe. Most important, transferences structure the researcher's ability to develop empathic relations with those subjects who provide the essential source of sociological data.

Guillemin & Gillam (2004) argue who the researchers are, their social and political beliefs, the way they chose the methodology of their research and the participants in their study and their personal values in general affect their research. What they are trying to say by this is that reflexivity in research is a constant process of critical reflection "both on the kind of knowledge produced from research and how that knowledge is generated" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, 274).

The researcher of this study used reflexivity with both major groups of participants in order to improve the quality and the validity of her research but also to be able to recognise the limitations of the knowledge that it produces (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). As it will be explained in the following sections, the interaction and communication with the participants was interesting and challenging making it even more necessary for the researcher to be reflexive towards her own emotions and role as a researcher and towards the way she collects and analyses her data. As Finlay (2003) stated – and mentioned previously in this section, the application of reflexivity has become a necessity when conducting research both during field work (the way the researcher chooses to approach the questions and the responses from the participants) and while drawing the findings from it (the way the researcher choses to interpret and analyse the data).

### 5.3.2.1    Applying reflexivity during field work

Even though the research process is going to be elaborated in the sections that follow, in this section it is acknowledged that there are two groups of participants in this study: women who were identified as being trafficked

and stakeholders who hold key positions in the government and NGOs. Before and during the field work, the researcher had to be reflexive with both groups. In regard to the first group of participants (women), the researcher, as a woman herself, had to reflect on her own beliefs and cultural norms in order to understand the victims better but also to control her emotions while listening to the horrific, heinous and traumatic stories. The researcher was also reflexive when analysing the data collected from the victims aiming to keep a more rigorous stance towards her results. As Richardson (1994) denoted "Self-reflexivity unmasks complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing" (cited in Finlay, 2003, 5).

Another important factor that the researcher had to reflect upon during the interviews was the cultural differences with the women. A very vivid example was a participant from Cameroon. She had her one-year-old child with her during the interview and the way she was treating her child (e.g. she would grab her daughter from the arm to lift her up) was against the researcher's belief on how to treat a child. However, the researcher knew (and learned more about it later) that this is the way people from her culture treat their children. Therefore, the researcher did not assume that the participant was not a good mother or that she was aggressive towards her child simply because it was the product of her abuse.

Prior to conducting interviews with the women, the researcher reflected on her limitation of working with people who have been trafficked. She believed that if she volunteered as a social worker to help and work with at least one, she would have a better understanding and a better approach towards interviewing women identified as having been trafficked. The researcher collaborated with an NGO called 'Cyprus Stop Trafficking' and started working on a regular basis with a victim. This experience gave her the provisions to better handle her own self and her approach during the interviews with the victims.

The interviews with the key stakeholders obviously have a different approach. They are people in power that can make a difference either in

the victims' lives or in the formation and implementation of policies and the phenomenon of trafficking in general. Reflexivity with this group of participants was used as a social critique, meaning that the researcher is recognising and managing the power imbalances between her and the participants during the interviews (Finlay, 2003). Some participants were reluctant to express their true thoughts on the subject at hand because of their position. The researcher had to be very careful not to provoke stressful behaviours or project her own feelings, towards the stakeholders deriving from the stories she heard from the women participants.

### 5.3.2.2 Applying reflexivity when generating findings

The researcher had to constantly remind herself about a few elements that needed her attention during the analysis, interpretation of the data and generation of the findings. As Guillemin & Gillam (2004) stated reflexivity should be considered under scrutiny as any other data in the study (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Firstly, the researcher had to be very careful not to include, in her analysis, parts the participants asked her not to include. There were a few things that participants expressed and then withdrew immediately. The researcher found herself feeling anxious when the participants withdrew statements because she felt that some of them could be very important for her results. As Finlay (2003, 15) ascertains, in a constructivist approach "researchers are engaged in an exercise of 'presenting' themselves to each other - and to the wider community which is to receive the research". Hence, how they will do that is apparently very significant to both. Secondly, according to Boulton and Hammersley (1996) and Mason (1996), researchers should be encouraged to reflect on their research and interpretations of their data because the validity of their interpretations is dependent on the demonstration of how they were reached (cited in Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Therefore, the researcher, of this study, is well aware that while analysing her data and producing her results, the interpretation of the data and findings derived from her own understanding of them which could be influenced by her own knowledge

and experiences as an active Cypriot citizen and a professional social worker. This could entail an element of bias or could act as a signature to her own work since the same data could be interpreted differently by other researchers with different knowledge and experiences (Finlay, 2003). As Guillemin & Gillam (2004) stated everything that the researchers bring with them to their study, whether it is their own social or personal values and beliefs or the way they choose what methods to use affects their work. Hence, they argue, as stated previously, that the researchers should be continuously critiquing their work, in this way limiting the chances of producing biased and invalid results. This is what the researcher of this study did throughout her work in an effort to acknowledge the dangers, the absence of reflexivity has, and to highlight how important it is to constantly reflect on her own beliefs and values and their impact on her own work. By applying reflexivity, the researcher has managed to give value to her work while producing valid and reliable results.

## 5.4    Research methods

This study is based on an applied social research which utilises both analytical and evaluation types of research. On the one hand, it tries to illuminate the problem so that the need for change and action is even more apparent and on the other hand, it aims to determine whether the existing policies and services are functional and adequate (Gilbert, 2001). As a constructivist, the study used interviews as a method since interviews are best utilised when there is a need to "understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge" because they allow the researcher to acquire multiple perspectives (Robson, 2002, 27). In addition, an analysis of grey literature was utilised to analyse the data from one NGO participant who wrote her opinion in the form of articles instead of giving a full interview to the researcher.

### 5.4.1  Qualitative approach

Qualitative approach and the use of interviews is a "way of getting close to the data and studying social interaction in its natural surroundings" (Gilbert, 2001, 33). The researcher, aiming to explore the perceptions and understanding of both women identified as being trafficked and key informants, decided to use semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews give the flexibility to the researcher to modify the order and wording of the questions depending on her perception of what seems most appropriate (Robson, 2002).

### 5.4.1.1      Semi-structured interviews

The interviews, with both participant groups, were semi-structured making the interview process flexible for both participants and researcher. Open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews with all the participants offering them adequate time to respond.

In the interviews with the women identified as having been trafficked, some types of questions were used more than others because of the sensitive background of the participants. For example, "interpreting questions" was often used because of language impediments, so the researcher wanted to be sure that both her and the participants had the same understandings of the discussion context. "Silence" was often used during the interview to give them adequate time to contemplate on what they had been through. Furthermore, "probing and specifying questions" were used in order to help and encourage the participants to elaborate more on what they were saying. The researcher, through the interviews, wanted to give an opportunity to the women to voice their experiences and their understanding on what is going on in Cyprus as far as trafficking of women is concerned but also on how the 'support system' has actually helped them.

On the other hand, in the interviews with the key informants, the mostly used types of questions were "introducing" questions in an effort to explore

how long and how they have been involved in tackling the trafficking phenomenon. "Direct" questions and "structuring" questions were also used a lot, aiming to explore their positions on the subject at hand and for the researcher to be able to guide them towards the various topic categories she wanted to discuss with them.

The interviews took place in the work place of the key informants and in the victims' apartments where they felt more comfortable. Only one interview was conducted with great difficulty and a lot of interruptions because of the victim's child. The child was too young, too active and was crying a lot. There was nobody that could care for the child while the victim was being interviewed.

### 5.4.1.2   Use of grey literature

Documents used in research, whether they derive from the state or private sources, need to be rigorously assessed before being analysed and included in the research (Bryman, 2004). They need to be assessed for their authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning, whether it is clear (ibid.).

The researcher utilised documents from the state (from Cyprus, USA, UN, EU) including annual reports, legislations, national action plans and national referral mechanisms. She chose documents that could be measured and assessed to the degree of impact on social policy and social work practice. They were used to create tables and also to supplement, to some extent, the interviews for a better understanding of the way policy makers and social workers view and comprehend the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. The documents were retrieved from the websites of the pertinent organisations.

Moreover, the researcher used the articles and reports/letters that one of the participants wrote herself to express her own understanding of the situation of sex trafficking in Cyprus. She is the founder of an NGO called

'Cyprus Stop Trafficking' Mrs Christofidou. The researcher met with Mrs Christofidou before meeting the other key stakeholders but the interview was short. Mrs Christofidou had provided the researcher with reports/letters and articles that she had written, which included all the information the researcher needed. In addition, since the interview, the researcher had become a friend and member of the organisation and now receives, by email, all the newsletters, articles and formal letters that Mrs Christofidou sends to all the members and publishes online.

## 5.5 Research process

The research process includes the sampling, data collection and data analysis phase. This section starts by presenting the sample: its criteria, the strategy which was used to choose it, the way the sample was recruited and its characteristics. Then, it describes the way the data was collected and analysed which includes the interview process, the topic guide which was used in the interviews and the way the transcription was done including the translation and interpretation of the data and the thematic and narrative analysis of it. Lastly, the limitations of the researcher are explicated along with the ethical considerations concerning her research.

### 5.5.1 Sampling

The sample was divided into two parts with two different approaches. The one part consisted of seven (7) women (see Table 5.1) who were identified by the police as being trafficked for sexual exploitation and the second part consisted of ten (10) stakeholders (see Table 5.2) in key positions in the government and NGOs to tackle THB and protect its victims. In the following sections, the way the researcher worked on choosing the sample for her study is described.

#### 5.5.1.1 Criteria

The criteria for the women participants were limited to just two: the women had to be identified by the police as having been trafficked for sexual

exploitation and the women had to be communicating in a language that the researcher could either communicate herself (English or Greek) or with the help of an available interpreter (e.g. most of women from Somalia did not speak English and there was no formal interpreter other than another Somalian woman).

As far as the stakeholders are concerned, the only criterion was that they held a key position either in the government, an NGO or local authorities and were involved in tackling HTB and protecting its victims. The number of key stakeholders that are involved in Cyprus unfortunately is small hence the sample of this study is also small.

### 5.5.1.2  Strategy and recruitment

Throughout her research, the researcher was working full time at a University in Cyprus. She believes that living in Cyprus has restricted her academic support for her research because of lack of academics with relevant background. A good idea for her would have been to create a group of people that could have supported her in various steps of her research by giving her advice on specific areas in their expertise. However, she did not create this group because she was not aware of the possibility of such a group and when she found out it was already too late.

However, even though a formal advisory group was not formed, the researcher attended every seminar and conference organised in Cyprus whether it was from NGOs or the state in an effort to: (a) gain more knowledge and information on the trafficking situation in Cyprus and (b) build rapport with key actors (policy makers, social workers, NGO workers). Through her the acquaintance with these key actors, the list of participants in the research was formed, namely both groups of victims of trafficking and key stakeholders. It took a lot of time for the researcher to accomplish this relationship with the key actors. Within three years of presenting herself at every event that was organised concerning trafficking, she managed to put her name out there as a researcher, social worker and PhD student who is

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researching trafficking of women.

The interviews with the women identified as having been trafficked were conducted first. The aim of the researcher was to hear their voices and their stories / understanding on what happened to them after they had escaped the trafficking situation - what type of help or difficulties they faced. Using the knowledge gained from the victims' realities, the researcher would then move on conducting the interview with the key informants.

The sample for the first group (women) was formed through a purposive type of sampling where originally a snowballing technique was supposed to be used because this technique applies when the population under study is hard to reach. "It involves contacting a member of the population to be studied and asking him or her whether they know anyone else with the required characteristic" (Gilbert, 2001). In this case, finding women that have been trafficked is apparently not easy. Therefore, the researcher contacted two organisations that are known in Cyprus for their work on helping and protecting victims of trafficking and started offering her services as a social worker, voluntarily. With this way, she was able to gain the trust of the organisations and to get familiar with women who have been trafficked. However, the snowball technique was not applied in the end, since most of the women did not want to know other women in the same situation as them, hence the researcher decided to use the organisations' workers as mediums to gain access to these women. These workers explained the researcher's role to the potential participants and helped them feel comfortable in talking to the researcher but they were probably limited in asking victims who could at least communicate in English and that they assumed they would be positive in participating. The researcher, asked the NGO workers to assure the potential participants that they would not have to talk about their trafficking experiences hoping that this approach would make it easier for them to agree to participate. In order to thank them for their willingness to participate or not, the researcher collaborated with a food bank in their area of residence, and the NGO they were affiliated with,

to receive a package of food. Unfortunately, the response was not what was expected. However, of the seven women that participated, six of them felt comfortable enough with the researcher to express themselves freely. The researcher believes that her social work skills facilitated the communication between her and the participants and the revelation of participants' understanding of their experiences. However, there is a consideration that the data might be biased since the organisations' officers approach the victims before the researcher.

**Table 5.1:    Sample – Victims of trafficking**

| No. | Participants' pseudonyms | Age when she was trafficked | Age when she was interviewed | Country of origin |
|-----|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Katrin | 20 | 29 | Syria |
| 2 | Emily | 23 | 29 | Morocco |
| 3 | Joy | 20 | 24 | Nigeria |
| 4 | Daniela | 21 | 24 | Romania |
| 5 | Marian | 25 | 31 | Cameroon |
| 6 | Roza | 40 | 41 | Romania |
| 7 | Sara | 30 | 35 | Morocco |

The sample of key informants was drawn through a sampling frame of people (representatives), both from the government and NGOs, who work towards combating the phenomenon of women trafficking and protecting the victims. The National Action Plan, for the tackling of human beings in Cyprus, was used to create the list of all the services that are involved and through those services invitations were sent for participation in the study.

Many of the participants (stakeholders) were anxious to listen to the researcher and her suggestions on various new strategies they could use to tackle trafficking and they were both from government and NGO positions. It was a very positive note for the researcher to observe such openness from people in positions of power. In general, all the participants were willing to participate in the research because they thought it would be important for such research to be conducted in Cyprus and they were also open to suggestions for improving their ways. There were only two

organisations that did not agree to participate because they did not have the time.

**Table 5.2:    Sample – Key informants**

| No. | Organisations | State or NGO | Participants representatives | Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ministry of Interior - Directorate of Migration, Asylum and European Affairs | State | Tania Charalambidou | Administrative officer for trafficking issues |
| 2 | Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings - Police | State | Antri Louka | Sergeant - Forensic Psychologist |
| 3 | Social Welfare Services | State | Marina Efthymiadou | Administrative officer on social policy |
| 4 | Civil Registry and Migration Department | State | Panayiota Fotiou | Administrative officer |
| 5 | Ombudsman's Office | State | Thekla Demetriadou | Officer of the authority against discriminations and the authority for the independent practice of human rights |
| 6 | Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies | NGO | Jossie Christodoulou | Policy Coordinator |
| 7 | Cyprus Stop Trafficking | NGO | Antroulla Christofidou | Founder |
| 8 | Caritas Cyprus | NGO | Gosia Chrysanthou | Manager |
| 9 | Future World Centre | NGO | Fatima Islam | Social worker |
| 10 | Wellspring Association - Room of Hope (project) | NGO | Sanna Koropela | Project Manager |

Foremost, the inquiry was conducted in the researcher's country and in her mother language which facilitated the rapport with the participants. Furthermore, most of the participants were already acquainted with the researcher from various conferences and seminars she had attended throughout the years of her research, concerning trafficking of women. Arranging meetings and building rapport with the participants, the researcher was already acquainted with, was easy and fast.

Interviews were held with 10 key informants who work for the government, local authorities and NGOs. These 10 people represent all the services responsible for combating the trafficking situation in Cyprus and for protecting its victims (see Table 5.2). Two more organisations were contacted - KISA (Action for Equality, Support and Anti-Racism) and Stella Kyriakides Chairwoman of the Parliament's Committee on Human Rights, but they refused to participate.

The strategy the researcher chose to use is based in her aim to explore both women and key stakeholders' views and understandings of what sex trafficking is and the 'helping system' in Cyprus. By comparing the victims' views with the views of the stakeholders, it provides this study with a sense of finding-justification which means that data emanating from the victims was used to enhance the interpretation of the data collected by the stakeholders. The specific strategy is what differentiates this study from other studies internationally since its findings are generated by empirical data on both sides of the coin which makes them, even though generated by a small-scale sample, very significant.

### 5.5.1.3  Sample characteristics

Firstly, it is interesting to point out that the participants of this study were all women. The participants of the first group were women who were identified by the police as having been trafficked. Four out of the seven women that participated were sexually exploited while living in Cyprus which means that they came to Cyprus on their own and while being there they were

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approached by traffickers and then coerced into having sex with clients. The traffickers threatened them by using their families back home as leverage. The degree in how far these women were victims of sex trafficking varies from one woman being in the trafficking situation for just one night to another being locked in a basement room for a year and a half. Even though their experiences within the trafficking situation are very different, the process of the 'helping system' they all experienced is the same. Hence, the researcher aims to explore the latter experiences and the understandings the women have on them.

Furthermore, the participants originated from, Syria, Romania, Nigeria, Cameroon and Morocco and most of them were trafficked when they were between 20 – 25 years old.  According to them, they all were high-school graduates and only one had a college degree. Five of them had children, but only one conceived it while being enslaved and raped by many men, consequently she does not know who the father is. Out of the seven women only one was married at the time of the interview. At the time of the interviews, all the women were facing financial difficulties but they all had a place in which to live.

The participants from the second group (stakeholders) were all women in key positions in the main government and non-government services which are involved in tackling THB and protecting its victims. They were all highly educated and their experience on THB varied from a year to ten and plus years.

### 5.5.2   Data collection and analysis

"Miles (1979) has described qualitative data as an 'attractive nuisance', because of the attractiveness of its richness but the difficulty of finding analytic paths through that richness" (Byrman, 2004, 399). It was easy for the researcher to lose target through all that large, cumbersome data that was collected through the qualitative approach. And it was very challenging for the researcher to try and limit the potentials of her data analysis. This section consists of the interview process which includes a description of the

topic guide and how the interviews are carried out and the transcription of the data including matters of language and translation and narrative analysis.

### 5.5.2.1       Interview process

The interview process consists of two steps: the creation of two topic guides that are used for the interviews with the two groups and a description of how the interviews are carried out.

### 5.5.2.1.1       Topic guide

As a constructivist, the researcher composed topic guides to help her unfold the views and understandings of both the women identified as having been trafficked and the key informants concerning the trafficking situation in Cyprus and the effectiveness of the extant services. Forming an interview guide "allows interviewers to glean the ways in which research participants view their social world and that there is flexibility in the conducting of the interviews" (Bryman, 2004, 324).

The topic guide for the women identified as having been trafficked was structured using very simple and comprehensible language since most of the participants were not fluent in English. The topic guide for the victims consisted of two parts. The first one concerned the demographic information and the second included questions about the experience after the victims escaped their trafficking situation.

For the key informants, the topic guide was structured through four dimensions: (1) their role and position of the organisation they represent concerning women trafficking; (2) their perception and definition of what women trafficking is; (3) their position on how the state is coping with the various social and political implications that women trafficking entails; and (4) their organisation's future plans to improve their involvement in combating women trafficking. The same topic guide (with minor alterations) was used with policy makers, social workers and managers of NGOs.

### 5.5.2.1.2    Carrying out the interviews

The interviews with the women identified as having been trafficked were conducted in their homes and the interviews with the key informants at their workplaces. The intention was for them to last one hour but the researcher did not set a time frame with the women identified as having been trafficked. The researcher wanted to give the opportunity to the women being trafficked to voice their opinion about the 'support system'. The researcher did not influence the participants in any way, when they were expressing negative feelings, towards certain services or people. The participants were encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts about their experiences without being challenged or criticised.

All the participants (women) collaborated well with the researcher. Before starting the interviews, the researcher searched and found services that were free and could be helpful to the participants.   At the end of the interviews, the researcher offered them referrals to services according to their needs.

The interviews with the key informants were conducted under a friendly climate and all were willing to talk openly, especially off the record. They did not seem to be intimidated by the researcher. On the contrary, they felt the need to share their knowledge and help the inquiry. Of course, there were things they could not share for political reasons and some limitations set by their organisations.

### 5.5.2.2  Transcription

A verbatim transcription was used for all interviews and was done by the researcher herself. Even though verbatim transcription is laborious and time-consuming, it helped the researcher to become familiar with her data (Gilbert, 2001). Since the number of interviews was small, the researcher chose verbatim transcription because it "offers the advantage that all possible analytic uses are allowed for" and because in this way data that may later become significant, is not lost (Gilbert, 2001, 135). Moreover, all

interviews were recorded using a voice recorder besides one where written notes were taken during the interview. Transcribing through the use of a voice recorder was challenging since the researcher had to go back repeatedly to make sure she had everything written down. Also, the interviews with the victims were transcribed at a slow pace since their pronunciation in English was not clear in which case the researcher had to listen to the recordings even more carefully.

### 5.5.2.2.1  Translation and language

Six interviews with the women identified as having been trafficked were conducted in English and one in Greek. No interpreter was used, however both languages were very poorly spoken. Albeit the transcription was verbatim, the pieces used in the thesis were adjusted by the researcher to make sense to the reader and concomitantly keeping it as much as possible similar to the original piece.

Most of the interviews with the key informants were conducted in Greek and a couple in English. The researcher acknowledges the limitations that some meanings might not translate correctly into English, however, she tried to be as exact as possible. After hearing the transcription of the interviews in Greek, the researcher in order to save time, did not translate all of them in English. She translated only the pieces she needed and paraphrased the rest in English while writing up the analysis.

### 5.5.2.2.2  Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis is utilised for the analysis of the data which entails, inter alia, "a sensitivity to: the connections in people's accounts of past, present and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of their place within those events and states of affairs; and the stories they generate about them. … It is the ways that people organise and forge connections between events and the sense they make of those connections that provides the raw material of narrative analysis" (Bryman, 2004, 412). More precisely, the researcher uses the model of thematic analysis on the data collected from

both groups to analyse what is said by the participants since the specific model gives "an emphasis on what is said rather than on how it is said" (ibid.). The researcher, after transcribing the interviews verbatim, started drawing themes out of them which she then put in tables she also created. These manually created tables were her own tool for making sense and interpreting what the participants have told her.

As a constructivist, the researcher uses narrative analysis to reveal the participants' understandings concerning their stories, experiences and role in THB. The researcher, before starting to analyse her data, reflected on it through objective observation. She tried to keep a distance from the database and asked two questions to help her understand her data better: 'What do I know?' first and then 'How do I know?' (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, 274).

## 5.6    Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations of this study pertain two sectors: (a) the way participants were recruited for the inquiry and (b) anonymity and confidentiality. A referral to reflexivity and ethical issues will also be included.

*Ethical considerations when recruiting trafficking victims:*
The women identified as having been trafficked participated in their own volition. The recruitment was time consuming because the researcher wanted to make sure that the participants understood the reasons and goals of the study well and that their participation would not harm them in any way. The recruitment was facilitated by two NGOs: Cyprus Stop Trafficking and Caritas Cyprus, the two organisations that have played a huge role in the protection of trafficking victims. The researcher decided to go through these two organisations to recruit her sample and not through the state for two reasons: first, because she had easier access - the state

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collaborates with both organisations referring the recognised victims to them for help; and second, the victims were residing in their own homes which were found for them by the organisations, thus being in their own environment when interviewed, and not in the governmental shelter, helped the researcher built rapport faster and also have privacy with no distractions.

Anonymity and confidentiality was well explained to the participants. An information sheet was given to them to read on their own time but the researcher also explained it to them before starting the interview. A consent form was also given to them to sign. The researcher went through each point with them making sure they understood that they had the right to stop the interview whenever they felt the need to stop and explained to them in simple words (because of some language barriers) that their names and identities would not be revealed in any way. The participants were asked for their permission to use a voice recorder. In order to make them feel more comfortable with recording the interviews, the researcher asked them to choose a pseudonym and so that name was used during the interview and not their real name. The participants seemed to actually enjoy having pseudonyms. Only one did not feel comfortable with a voice recorder hence written notes were used by the researcher.

*Ethical considerations when recruiting key informants:*
The recruitment of key informants was based on the positive or negative response of the organisation they represented. The individuals themselves did not have any choice but to participate if their organisation accepted to take part in the researcher's study. The researcher contacted each participant by phone; firstly by explaining her study and asking for an appointment and secondly, by emailing them the information package of her study making sure that the participants knew exactly what the inquiry included therefore giving them a chance to prepare themselves. The researcher acknowledged the fact that the key informants represented an organisation and did not want to cause any discomfort by not giving them

the opportunity to prepare for the interview.

As far as anonymity was concerned, it was clear to the participants from the beginning that since they represented an organisation, a state or NGO service, it was not possible to hide their identity. However, the researcher preserved their right to confidentiality when they confined any information to her that was off the record. A voice recorder was used only upon their agreement.

*Reflexivity and ethical issues:*

Ethical issues should be taken into consideration when using reflexivity. Foremost, through the interactions with the participants, the researcher demonstrated her respect towards the participants' autonomy, dignity and privacy, therefore protecting them from harm. Furthermore, the way the researcher accomplished informed consent with the women identified as having been trafficked was through her own abilities and techniques to communicate and not through a piece of paper that was perused (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). In addition, the researcher was alerted towards her own behaviour and her own personal ethical stances when contacting participants. Using reflexivity helped the researcher to foresee most ethical pitfalls and predicaments, protecting in this way both herself and her participants (ibid.). In her effort, not to harm the participants, the researcher repeatedly reviewed her research interventions before applying them thus trying to understand how they would affect herself and her participants. The research, being reflexive, actually helped her to be prepared for any potential reactions from the participants and to develop skills to respond appropriately even with unforeseen situations (ibid.).

Despite the researcher's preparation for the interviews and her ability to react professionally during the interviews, after one specific participant (victim) finished telling her story of trafficking, the researcher went to her car and burst into tears after reflecting upon everything she had heard. It was a physical and emotional reaction that she could not hold inside

because, after all, she was a woman listening to another woman's story of torture. The researcher believes that this experience gave her more strength and determination to help the women who have been trafficked.

*Ethical considerations when keeping records:*

Transcriptions of interviews and consent forms were kept in different files and were put in different drawers with locks in the researcher's house. Even though, consent forms of the victims of trafficking had their pseudonym as their name, they had put their real signature on it. On the transcriptions of the victims' interviews, their pseudonyms were used as a code and the researcher was very careful not to mention their real names during the recording of the interviews. The recordings of the interviews were saved in a USB which was saved in the drawer along with the transcriptions and the notebook with all the contact information.

## 5.7    Validity and reflections

Validity refers to the quality of the research, it "refers to whether you are observing, identifying, or "measuring" what you say you are" as a researcher (Bryman, 2004, 273). The researcher approached this inquiry employing reflexivity throughout the research process. By doing this, the researcher reflected on her own work and methods and avoided any possible predicaments thus ensuring the validity of her data. All the participants were willing to participate and express their opinions freely. Their positions on the matter under study were transcribed and translated in the best possible way. One participant (key stakeholder) asked to review the transcription of her interview in case she mentioned something that would put her and her organisation at risk. The researcher of course collaborated with that demand. The research results are based on formal positions of people in power (policy makers, managers and social workers) and their organisations but also on the stories of the women identified as having been trafficked. The researcher has an obligation to present the

results as carefully as possible and as closely to the truth as possible.

## 5.8    Research limitations

Initially, the sample of this research is small which indicates that general conclusions cannot be drawn from it. If the number was larger, then both the research and the participants could have benefited more. Furthermore, there were some language issues that the researcher had to deal with. For example, all the women identified as having been trafficked (participants) had a few issues with communicating on a good level with the researcher. Consequently the information shared, even though it is still very important, could have been more precise and richer if the researcher spoke in their own language. In addition, most of interviews with the key stakeholders (participants) were conducted in Greek and it is expected that some data can be lost in the translation from Greek to English.

Moreover, the interviews with the women participants (victims) were conducted a few years after they were identified by the police as having been trafficked. The time elapsed from their trafficking experience could have acted negatively to the way they understood their experiences at the time of the interviews and probably did so in some degree. However, the researcher aims to explore their views that derive not from their trafficking experience as such, but from their experiences that came after their escape which are linked to the way they lived up to the time of the interviews. With that in mind, the researcher acknowledges that if the interviews were conducted closer to the time of these women's escape from their trafficking experience, the data collected might have been a bit different but she would have missed out on grasping the description of the 'life after' their trafficking experience.

## 5.9    Conclusion

The research adopted a qualitative approach to explore the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus through semi-structure interviews with women-victims of trafficking and people in positions of power such as policy makers, managers and social workers. Qualitative methods were implemented aiming to give an opportunity to the victims to voice their opinion and to the key stakeholders to present their views on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus. Through this exploration, the researcher wanted to evaluate the efforts of the state to tackle human trafficking and compare them with the way these efforts are envisaged and understood by the women identified as having been trafficked. The methodology of this study was based on social constructivism and, through the various methods used, the researcher was able to better understand the association between practice and social policy concerning trafficking of women for commercial sex.

# CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the in-depth interviews with seven women who were identified by the police as being trafficked. It addresses one of the aims of this study concerning the extent of the women's understanding of their trafficking situation but also their needs and degree of satisfaction regarding the services they received from governmental services and NGOs. Furthermore, the researcher utilised the social constructionism approach to interview and analyse their stories with a focus on how and why they were trafficked and not on what happened to them (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). Surprisingly, the participants willingly shared what happened to them as well. It is argued that the social constructionist perspective contends that "all 'narratives sit at the intersection of history, biography, and society' (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, 132 in Hunter, 2010, 44) and they are dependent on the context of the teller and the listener" (Hunter, 2010, 44). Therefore, narratives in this study are analysed taking into consideration the various factors that have influenced the construction of the victims' understanding of their experiences. But also, the researcher is being cautious with the way reflexivity is used during her analysis of the participants' narratives and she is presenting their own understanding of their experiences as objectively as possible. Themes are surfaced and analysed through the stories of the seven women identified as having been trafficked in Cyprus for commercial sex, and the findings deriving from them are presented in this chapter.

## 6.2    Participants' profile

All the women interviewed were adults at the time when they were trafficked, in January – April 2015. Five of them were from 20 – 25 years old, one was 30 and one 40 years old (see Table 6.1). Two are from Morocco, two from Romania, two from Cameroon and one from Syria. Six out of seven women come from poor families. Five of them migrated with the hope of a better life, the sixth (Joy) was forced with twenty other girls to leave and travel to another country (Cyprus) and the seventh (Katrin) chose to come to Cyprus because she liked it and wanted to live here. Katrin comes from a middle-class family and she was working for Syrian Airlines before deciding to leave and come to Cyprus. She had visited Cyprus twice before for vacation and consciously made the decision to move and live in Cyprus. Most of the women were not educated and had low-paid jobs or no jobs at all. Furthermore, four out of seven did not have close relationships with their families (all participants' families were back in their home countries) and two of them had children out of wedlock who were living back home with friends. The women who stated they had very strong family bonds come from three different countries (Syria, Cameroon and Morocco) hence no cultural link to family bondage appears to be present. However, it seems that all of them, besides Katrin, were desperate for money to support themselves and their families back home.

This study's findings, on victims' profiles, agrees with the findings from most research on trafficked women's profiles for sexual exploitation. Most research denotes that poor women, unemployed, uneducated, socially deprived, with weak family bonds and women that have the desire to emigrate in search for a better life are at a higher risk and more attractive to traffickers (Hughes, 2000; Hodge, 2008; Hodge and Lietz, 2007).

## 6.3    Participants' trafficking experience

The trafficking experience involves everything the victims experience from the moment they realise they are deceived until the moment they are reintegrated back into their families (which does not happen very often, only if they wish to go back home and it is safe for them to do so) and society. This experience consists of many phases and consequences that the victims are forced to endure. This section will analyse the trafficking process: how the participants were recruited, transported and controlled and the consequences they endured (see Table 6.2).

### 6.3.1   Trafficking process

The trafficking process may include various phases and various activities. The three phases that are frequently documented are: recruitment, transportation and control within the country of destination (Melrose and Barrett, 2006).

*Recruitment:*

Recruitment could happen through false-front agencies, local sex industries and abduction (Hodge, 2008). All three recruitment categories include deception of people usually in vulnerable financial or family situations who trust agents that promise them better jobs and a better quality of life.

Six out of the seven women that participated in this study shared their trafficking stories. The seventh woman, Emily, did not want to share it. Five out of six participants, that shared their trafficking experience, stated that they were desperate to find a better life for them and their families; they wanted to find work and send money back to their families. The same ones said that they had been deceived, by people they knew or their friends knew, on what type of work they were going to do hence, they were betrayed by friends. According to Hughes (2000), the recruitment, through friends or acquaintances, that gains women's trust is one of the best nown methods that traffickers use.

Sara: I came here [Cyprus] to find restaurant job and found another job… [when] I went home (studio/apartment) I saw the girl change clothes and I say [to her] why you change clothes, I brought clothes from my country and I have jeans and… she checked my bag and she said what [are] these clothes, no. I say what [do] you want? … she said you came here for cabaret not for restaurant. I say I do not know anything about cabaret and I asked to find me work to clean office and she said sorry but [you] can not change cause your visa is for work in a cabaret.

*Transportation:*

Transportation is done through false documentations or with 'artist' or 'work' visas which implies corruption of officials (Hughes, 2000). Most of the participants were already in Cyprus when they were recruited, but the two that were recruited from back home, did not have any documentation since they had never travelled away from their country before and all the necessary documents were prepared by their traffickers which they never actually received themselves. One stated (Sara) that she paid money (€1000) to the trafficker to get to Cyprus.

*Control:*

Control starts with the confiscation of personal belongings (usually passports and identities), it then includes a 'debt-bondage' beginning with their travelling expenses and then the victims end up being controlled as 'commodities' (Hodge and Leitz, 2007). All the participants that came from countries outside Europe (5 participants) stated that all their papers were confiscated. Four of them stated that they were locked and controlled in everything they did and the same ones stated that they did not speak English or Greek so they had no means of communicating besides the body language or understanding of what was going on around them.

Katrin: [The boss] took us home… if you see where he put us, it is like for animals you know, this place the windows like prison… scary too

much inside, I do not know how to tell you about this house… He used to lock the door first few days when I came. He used to tell me that immigration can ask for my papers and it is safer to be at home.

Another way in which traffickers control the women is through abusive behaviour towards them (Hughes, 2000). All six participants were abused, four out of six were abused physically, sexually and psychologically, one sexually and psychologically and one only psychologically. The latter only went through the recruitment phase because of a police raid where she was saved right before she was afflicted with any other type of abuse. Marian was sexually abused by men on a daily basis. She was locked in a room for a year and a half with no windows.

> Sara: The boss told me to dance with four Arabic men. I hear them speak in Arabic something very bad. I understand this because it is my language [but] they don't know I am Arabic and I run to the toilet. The boss came behind me and started to shout, you go back to dance and I say no I don't want to and we start fighting and I broke something, glass I think, so he called the police. When the police came, they speak Greek and they put me in the office, nobody talk with me maybe because I don't speak Greek or English well and then the boss with the police shout at me that if I do that again he will take me to jail.

Furthermore, five out of six participants said that they were threatened in some way: their traffickers threatened them that if they tried to escape, they would let their families know that they work as prostitutes; the traffickers threatened their family members' lives; the traffickers convinced them that they were illegal and that if they went to the police, they would be put in jail.

**Table 6.1: Participants' (victims) profile**

| No. | Participants | Country of Origin | Age[22] | Socio - Economical status | Family bonds | Work status back home | Reason for leaving their country | Trafficking method |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Katrin | Syria | 20 | Middle-Class | Very strong | Ground attendant at Syria Airlines | She came to Cyprus before and liked it and wanted to live there | Through a friend while living in Cyprus |
| 2. | Emily | Morocco | 23 | Lower class | She presented herself to be alone with no family bonds | Waitress in restaurants and bars | To work and send money to her family | From back home – through acquaintances |
| 3. | Joy | Nigeria | 20 | Lower class | No mention of her family back home | Not mentioned | She did not choose to leave – she was forced | From back home - trafficked with 20 other girls |
| 4. | Daniela | Romania | 21 | Lower class | No family bonds – one child back home | There were no jobs back home | To work and send money to her child back home | Trafficked in Cyprus by her boss – worked in a pub |
| 5. | Marian | Cameroon | 25 | Lower class | Very strong – old parents to care for and twin boys - toddlers | Caring for an elderly woman | To work and send money to her family | From back home – through a friend |
| 6. | Roza | Romania | 40 | Lower class | No bonds – one daughter back home staying with friends | She was unemployed back home but was working in Cyprus for a few years | To work and send money to her child back home who was sick | Through a friend while living in Cyprus |
| 7. | Sara | Morocco | 30 | Lower class | Strong | No job | To work and send money to her family | Through a friend while living in Cyprus |

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[22] The age presented in the table is the age when the participants were trafficked.

Three out of six stated that they did not go to the police because they were told by their traffickers that they were illegal and that if they went to the police they would be put in jail. Only one stated that she did not trust the police because policemen were customers hence she thought that the police was corrupted.

> Sara: I asked the girl if I [can] go to the police and she said no because my visa writes cabaret so I have a problem … I do not understand (what is on the visa) because I don't understand the language, first time I have passport, first time I have visa. I don't know nothing. Anyway, I came to Cyprus [and] I don't have passport, I don't have visa, she (the girl) took everything and I have nothing. So, I ask the girl to go to police and she said no because if you go they will take you to jail and back to Morocco.

Lastly, three out of six stated that other women (usually European), who were not victims, were watching them and reported everything they did to their boss. Even though it is not reported whether these other women were previously trafficked themselves, Scheper-Hughes (2000) notes that a recruitment method the traffickers use is the so called 'second wave' where victims of trafficking recruit other victims for trafficking.

### 6.3.2 Consequences of trafficking

The consequences trafficking for sexual exploitation have on the victims are, without doubt, severe and some of them permanent as well. They proliferate when the victim is in the trafficking situation for a longer time. The victims are affected and abused emotionally, psychologically, physically and socially. Their whole inner world is torn down, their self-esteem, self-image, and self-confidence are shaken, they may feel unworthy, unloved and degraded (Roby, 2005). Many times, they feel that there is no hope and no help for them and are filled with emotions of giving up or even ending their own life or they end up going back to the trafficking situation if they had managed to escape (Roby, 2005; Melrose and Barrett, 2006). Their physical health is also affected. Many victims experience memory difficulty, headaches, fatigue,

stomach pain, gynecological infections and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Zimerman, 2008; Muftic and Finn, 2013). As it is going to be analysed in the following sections, all participants in this study were abused emotionally/psychologically and sexually/physically (besides Roza who was not abused as previously mentioned).

### 6.3.2.1    Emotional / Psychological consequences

Six out of the seven participants reported being emotionally/psychologically abused. Emily did not report her trafficking story but from her story regarding her life after the trafficking situation, she presented herself as a person that does not trust anyone, and with health and psychological issues. Moreover, through the participants' stories, it was indicated that they were faced with a lot of emotional challenges where fear and despair were the predominant emotions about their trafficking situation but also about their lives thereafter. Loss of trust and deep scars from the abuse they experienced had surfaced through their stories as well.

*Fear:*

Fear is a common consequence of trafficking for the victims since traffickers are fuelled by victims' fear. Katrin was scared for two reasons: one because somebody threatened her family and second her family could find out what she did. Sara was also scared of her family finding out that she had lost her virginity and that she had been with a lot of men.

> Sara: I don't know what to do. The money I gave to this woman, my brother took from a bank to give it to me, so how do I go back in my country and give my brother back the money? I [have] to help my brother, my father, my mother, my sister, all my family. I [am supposed to] clean houses to send money to my family to eat because my father does not work. So really, I can not go back and I don't know what to do. I cry…

Katrin's trafficker kept threatening her even during the court case aiming to stop her testimony against him. She stated:

My mother called me and told me that somebody called her from private number and said that he is friends with a Cypriot guy and they want to give her an advice. They told her to tell me not to go to court tomorrow because if I go they will destroy my house, my family.

Marian was scared to tell her story to the police when she was arrested with fake papers at the airport because her traffickers gave her a threatening warning in advance. She said:

They (the traffickers) told me that if I create problems at the airport they will kill my son, so I did not say anything.

*Loss of trust:*

One example of how victims lose their trust in people is Sara's example. The police officers for Sara were friends with her trafficker. Some police officers were helping her boss and some were also clients at the cabaret where she was placed to work. In addition, she found it difficult to trust the police because she was told that she was going to be arrested and then she would not be able to support her family. However, when she finally went to the police, with help from a friend, she was surprised. She said:

I went to the police and I found out they are like family. First I have a bad picture in my head for police and now everybody smile and when they told me that I do not have a problem with visa I felt like one door was closed for 4 months and now it is open. I started crying for long time, one hour, one hour and a half? I do not remember, I cry and cry I can not stop, you know I am happy. But really for four months it was a black life, this is what I say.

Katrin has stated that because of the horrible experience she finds it very difficult to trust any person thus making her everyday life very difficult. Verbatim she said:

This experience, it cost me… I do not trust anybody especially men.

*Despair:*

Katrin: (The trafficker kept buying property and cars and Katrin told the police to check where his income comes from). Until last week my lawyer called me and told me he [the trafficker] transferred his properties to someone else and told me to do something about it and I told her [the lawyer] to leave me alone, I do not want anything because this money was not clean… I do not want…. I never needed help from the government because I was always working. The time I stopped working and needed help was when I applied for asylum refugee status… I go crazy, I do not want to remember this time, I had to wait for 11 months.

A participant (Emily) wanted to work in a bar because that is what she is good at (being a barwoman) and the police did not let her because her case was still open and her working in such places would act as a major risk factor for losing the case. Emily replied to them as follows:

Did you know me when I did not have food? Did you know me when they threw me in the hospital as a dog? I did not have a bottle of water to drink, I walked from the hospital to my house an hour and a half after the operation in the heat, in the summer. Did you know me then? Did you ask about me? Nobody asked. I stayed again for five days in the hospital because I got infected did you ask then? No.

## Table 6.2:    Participants' (victims) trafficking experience

| No. | TOPIC | P.1 Katrin | P.2 Emily | P.3 Joy | P.4 Daniela | P.5 Marian | P.6 Roza | P.7 Sara | Sum out of 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Demographics for participants** (The number in the parenthesis is their age at the time they were recruited for trafficking and the other is their age at the time they were interviewed – the last number is the length of time in the trafficking situation and the country is the country of origin) | (20): 29 Syria -1 yr- | (23): 29 Moro-cco -5 m- | (20): 24 Nigeria -1 yr- | (21): 24 Romania -1 yr- | (28): 31 Came-roon -1 yr 6 m- | (40): 41 Roma-nia -1 night- | (30): 35 Moro-cco -5 m- | 7 |
| 1. | They were locked and controlled in everything they did and everywhere they went | √ | -- | √ | | √ | | √ | 4 |
| 2. | They were threatened either by their families being told of what they did, or their families/children's lives being threatened – or that they would go to jail because they were illegal | √ | -- | √ | √ | √ | | √ | 5 |
| 3. | They were desperate to work to send money back home to their family or children | √ | -- | | √ | √ | √ | √ | 5 |
| 4. | They were physically / sexually abused by their employer or others | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | 6 |
| 5. | They were emotionally / psychologically abused by their boss or others | √ | -- | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | 6 |
| 6. | Other women were the ones who were controlling them or reporting to their employer about them | √ | -- | | | | √ | √ | 3 |
| 7. | Their papers were confiscated | √ | √ | √ | | √ | | √ | 5 |
| 8. | They paid a lot of money to get to Cyprus – to the traffickers | | -- | | | | | √ | 1 |
| 9. | They did not speak English or Greek – language barriers | √ | | √ | | √ | | √ | 4 |
| 10. | They were trafficked from back home | | | √ | | √ | | | 2 |
| 11. | They trusted friends and friends betrayed them | √ | -- | | √ | √ | √ | √ | 5 |
| 12. | They were deceived on what type of work they would do | √ | | | √ | √ | √ | √ | 5 |

Moreover, participants were having difficulties communicating because of language barriers. Sara found that language barriers caused her many problems. She was not able to read her personal documents and her visa so she was deceived, by being lied, to that her visa stated her work was in a cabaret. Marian only spoke French and she did not know what was going on with her case and no one paid any attention to her. Marian said that when she finally started telling her story to a police woman called Maria, with the help of an interpreter, she could not finish it because she was crying a lot and Maria told her to continue another time when she was better. According to Marian, Maria never showed up again. She said:

> I called her because she gave me her number at the office and I called and said, 'I want to talk to Maria' and they said Maria was not there and I told them to tell her to come and see me because I do not know what happened again, because she told me she was going to come and take me somewhere (she meant to show her the house that she was held as prisoner). At that time, I did not know English very well and I had one girl there [in the shelter] from Nigeria that knew English and she talked to the police.

Marian was seeing a social worker, a volunteer from the Cyprus Stop Trafficking because she was in a very bad psychological situation. She said:

> Before, every time I wanted to kill myself but since I met with the social worker everything is fine I am very happy. Now I do not think bad or when I think bad I make it go away.

Roza was traumatised by her experience in the shelter because of her daughter back home being sick and her only thought was that she could not send her money. She said:

> We were locked in and I have problem with my daughter back home, I had to send her money but I was locked in here who is going to give her money… and I keep thinking and I cry, cry and cry…

Fear, loss of trust and despair are the emotional and psychological responses of the victims to their trafficking experience either during their trafficking situation or out of it. These emotions and psychological trauma did not disappear when they left the trafficking situation. They strongly remained with them throughout their lives thereafter. All of them reported that they had a lot of psychological issues even after their escape from the trafficking situation. Marian even thought of ending her life because she could not stop having 'bad thoughts', and she meant the images from being raped repeatedly.

### 6.3.2.2   Sexual / Physical consequences

All participants were sexually/physically abused besides Roza as mentioned previously, as well as Emily who did not share her story. All the other five participants were forced to have sex with clients. It is not easy to differentiate the physical from the sexual abuse since by being sexually abused there is a lot of physical restrains for the victim caused by the perpetrator. Physical abuse, though, can happen without being sexually abused. However, the participants of this study are women identified as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, some of the participants were also afflicted with severe diseases.

Two out of the six participants who were sexually abused were infected with sexually transmitted diseases. Marian got infected with HIV. She was also pregnant while carrying the virus. She was worried that her baby would have the virus too. Marian thought that she was going to die from this disease and that her baby would die too. No one explained to her what HIV was. The second participant who got infected was Katrin. She was dignosed with HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) and according to her, she had to go through a painful laser treatment and treatment with expensive injections that her 'boss' was paying for. Katrin said that the treatment of her disease was one of the reasons why she did not try to escape. She said:

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I tried many times to run and the customers used to beat me sometimes. I was sick once and I had to take injections €344 (she referred to 200 Cyprus pounds because the currency was still in CY pounds at the moment of her trafficking situation) and he (her boss) used to send me with customers with period and with my disease to go and have sex with customers so I can pay him back the €200.

Katrin was a virgin when she came to Cyprus to work. Her boss, after a month of treating her like one of the family, got drunk one night and raped her and the other girl that was with her. Katrin said:

We were virgins when we came to Cyprus and he raped us and every time he used to do that, he told me, I call your mother and I tell her you are not a virgin and you go with customers, you work for money. So, this is the first thing that kept me quiet but the worst thing is the 'sick' (disease).

Sara called her life in Paphos (a city in Cyprus) a 'black life'. She worked in a cabaret and she did not want to talk about it in detail because she did not want to remember that life. She said:

In Paphos, somebody is always with you if you want to buy something but most of the time you are locked home.

Marian was locked in a basement for a year and a half with no windows having men coming every day. She was not able to give details about her experience, as expected, since the trauma was so severe, but her following words described it very well:

I have three or four men come every day. Every time I hear the door open my heart… [cries].

It was expected that the participants would not be able to give details about their sexual abuse but from their behaviour and body language throughout

the interviews it was easy to observe the pain and trauma they had experienced and still the researcher was not capable of grasping the magnitude of it. The participants' health was still in recovery when they were being interviewed even if their trafficking experience had happened some years ago.

## 6.4 Deposition process for being a victim of trafficking

At this point, the participants' views and understandings will unfold on how they experienced the government's 'help' from the moment they managed to leave the trafficking situation and were identified as having been trafficked, to the moment they were released from their court responsibilities.

### 6.4.1 Participants' understanding on how they escaped the trafficking situation

Almost all participants had different stories of escaping from the trafficking situation. Katrin (P.1) and Joy (P.3) said that they got help from customers. Katrin befriended two customers and tricked the 'boss' and Joy said that one customer felt sorry for her and acted as the escape car for her. Both acts were done out of despair for their lives. Emily (P.2), Daniela (P.4) and Roza (P.6) were rescued by the police. Daniela and Roza were both rescued by police raids (different ones) and Emily was rescued by the police but in her own flat after a tip off by another girl who came to Cyprus at the same time as Emily and from the same country. Marian (P.5) was arrested at the airport where her traffickers were trying to send her to a different country with fake papers because she got pregnant and she was arrested by the police as an illegal immigrant. And lastly, Sara (P.7) was saved by an NGO volunteer while walking in the street. Four out of the seven told their story for the first time to an officer from the anti-trafficking police; two out of seven told it to a volunteer from an NGO; and one out of seven told her story for the first time to an officer (woman) from the asylum service. Four out of the seven were contacted by the anti-trafficking police so they could tell their stories and the other three contacted the anti-trafficking police to tell their stories with the help of others (e.g. NGOs and asylum service).

### 6.4.2    Participants' experience with the police

Most of the participants did not get in touch with the general police officers. Only one reported that police officers were customers and they were corrupt. According to Melrose and Barrett (2006), victims might be afraid to go to the police because of either the vulnerability of their immigration status or because they think they will not help them since they had experiences of police corruption. As it is mentioned in the previous section, three out of six participants were afraid to go to the police because of their immigration status and one due to experiencing police corruption while being trafficked.

> Katrin: At first it was too much for me because I did not know who they are, I did not know who they are protecting and what it would happen, I was too scared you know? Because how can you trust them? The one policeman [who was a customer] was in a very high position, he was an old man and anywhere if you say his name everybody is shaking. There was another policeman who was under the older guy and a third one who was for the traffic police. I was shaking all the time, I was crying I wanted to tell but I was a little scared and then I say I will tell everything and leave everything for good, what could I do? I could not believe that I run from them.

All of them were interviewed by the anti-trafficking police and they were identified as having been trafficked. Five out of seven stated that the anti-trafficking police helped them in some way. Three out of seven said that the police officers were very good and polite. Two out of seven stated that the police officers were supportive and that they protected them. Two out of seven stated that they were helped by the police officers to find a job. Only one said that she felt pressured into telling her story to them and another one said that she told her story to one of the police officers and then she never saw anybody from the police again.

### 6.4.3    Participants' experience with the social welfare services

The participants did not have anything positive to say about the social services. Their first contact with a social worker from the social services was in the shelter where they were placed after they told their story to the anti-trafficking police. All seven of the participants stated that the social worker did not explain anything about their rights or anything else concerning their situation and all seven of them also stated that they did not get any other type of support or referrals from the social worker. One stated that she did not meet a social worker at all while she was at the shelter and another one said that when the social worker came to see her at the shelter she was rude to her because the participant was pregnant and had to spit a lot and the social worker was disgusted by that. Two other participants stated that the social worker only came once to take them to the hospital for blood tests and creation of medical card.

All the participants were helped by the social workers to find a place to stay after they left the shelter but did not do much to help them after that. They all said that social workers again did not give them any other type of support or referrals while living away from the shelter. Three out of seven stated that they changed their social worker two to four times. Three out of seven said that their social worker did not speak English hence they had difficulties communicating. One even stated that she was treated badly by her social worker (meaning that she was rude to her) and another said that she was left with no money for months while waiting for asylum approval. Finally, one participant said that the social worker went to see her long after she left the shelter just to see where she lives. Only one participant said good things about one of her social workers who helped her with everything she needed.

### 6.4.4    Participants' experience with other government services

The other government services that were mentioned that the participants communicated with were the Civil Registry and Migration Department, the

Labour Office and the Ministry of Interior. Regarding the Civil Registry and Migration Department, three out of seven participants said that they were not very helpful and two of those said that they were patronising and rude to them. The rest of the four participants had no opinion and two stated that they had only been there once. The Ministry of Interior was only mentioned by one participant who had some issues with her visa and was contacted by the Ministry and she formed a good relationship with one of the women officers there. Regarding the Department of Labour, five out of the seven participants did not visit it because they did not know they had to. One had bad comments about the employees saying that they are rude and do not answer the phones while the other one had a good experience with a man officer who helped her.

### 6.4.5 Participants' experience with non-government organisations (NGOs)

The non-government organisations that were mentioned by the participants are the Cyprus Stop Trafficking organisation, the Future World Centre and the Caritas Migrant Centre. Only one got help from the Future World Centre where she received free psychological support from them as well. The Cyprus Stop Trafficking organisation got in touch and helped four out of the seven participants. These four participants had only good things to say about the organisation. Two of them received money to pay for their trip to visit their families back home, another one received money from them until she started getting money from the social welfare office and another one got help with her alien book.

### 6.4.6 Participants' experience living in the government shelter

All seven participants were placed in the shelter after they were suspected of being possible victims of trafficking. Most of the women participants reported that they did not like staying in the shelter but almost all of them understood why they had to stay there. All of them said that the only people they came in touch with while staying in the shelter were the women working there, the police officers and the social worker. Four out of seven participants stated

that the police came and took them to the police station to give their statements and all of them stated that they met the social worker at least once while living in the shelter. Only two out of the seven participants had a detailed description of their experience in the shelter, the other ones did not have much to say about it. One said that she felt it was like a prison but she also said that the people working there were nice and that the women staying in the shelter were given €17 every week. Four out of seven said that they were allowed to go outside the house for a few hours and had to be back by a certain time or else the police would go and look for them. The same four participants stated that they had to clean their own toilets and bedrooms even though there was a cleaning lady. Two out of seven admitted that it was boring living there because there was nothing to do. Generally, most of them did not want to be there and all seven participants stated that nobody explained anything about their rights or relevant policies and laws to them.

## 6.5    Participants' lives after their court case was finished

Most women, no matter how much time has passed since their trafficking situation, whether one or nine years, have recalled many details from their experiences which indicates that it is an experience they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. And, as said previously, only four out of the seven received psychological support.

Katrin, at the time of the interviews, was living alone in a flat and had a job as a waitress in a restaurant. She said that her salary was just enough to get by, even though she could be getting more for the hours that she worked (there was a hint that her boss was taking advantage of her because she was foreign).  Eight years passed since her trafficking situation but Katrin was very intense on how she still feels about it. She is still scared that her family will find out the truth about her story, she finds it very difficult to trust anyone and she is worried about her future in general and especially whether her future husband would find out about her past.

Emily, at the time of the interview, was in a very bad situation. Almost five years after her trafficking situation and she still remembered everything in detail. At the time, she was living in a flat and she also owed three months' rent to the owner. She was recovering from surgery and a heavy cold. She had no money, issues with the welfare office, and she couldn't find a job. She said that she feels abandoned by everyone and that she has no rights in Cyprus.

Joy, had been out of the situation for almost three years at the time of the interview. She was living in a flat on her own with her baby girl who was the result of all the men she was forced to be with. She was seeing a psychologist at the beginning but she said that she stopped even though it was very obvious, throughout the interview, that she had many unresolved issues. She was getting money from the welfare office and some help from the Cyprus Stop Trafficking organisation.

Daniella, at the time of the interview, was living alone in flat with her two children. She had money issues because her court case had finished and the welfare office stopped giving her money. They argued that she should try and find a job but Daniella at the time had just had a baby and could not work. The father of her children had left Cyprus, and went back to Romania. Daniella stated that he does not help her financially but they do keep in touch. She also said that she has another daughter by another man back in Romania and she needs to send money to her too. She said that she has no support from anyone and that she does not know what to do. Some advice and referrals were given to her by the researcher.

Marian had been out of the trafficking situation for about two years at the time of the interview. She was living in a flat alone with her baby girl that was a result of her trafficking experience. Marian was traumatised by her experience and also infected with HIV. At the time of the interview, Marian did not know if her baby was infected as well and that was something that really affected her (she was in the process of testing the baby but she had to wait until the baby

was two to make the final test). Marian did not know what the future would look like for her and her baby and she was scared of forming any relationship with a man. Marian was seen regularly by a therapist and she said she was getting better. She was getting money from the welfare office but she admitted that she would like to find a job and be able to support her children. She has two more children back in Cameroon, twin boys, and she hopes to bring them to Cyprus one day.

Roza is the "lucky" participant who had only been in the trafficking situation for one night and was rescued by the police just before she was forced to do anything that she did not want to do. At the time of the interview, only one year had passed since that night. The fear, though, that she carries with her was obvious throughout the interview. The fear of doing something that she did not want to do and the thought of 'what would happen' if the police had not come. At the time of the interview, Roza had financial difficulties and different issues with the welfare office (she was not getting any money). She was living in a flat on her own but she had an arrangement, with the owner who let her live there, that she would give him the money she owed as soon as she got a job. She was getting help from people that she knew but Roza appeared desperate with her financial situation. Some references were given to her by the researcher. She also stated that she has a daughter back in Romania and she wants to bring her here but she cannot because she does not have any money.

Sara had been out of the trafficking situation for five years at the time of the interview. She is married to a Cypriot and has three young children. She also faces financial difficulties since both her and her husband do not work. Sara said that they too had some issues with the welfare office and did not get any help from them. She said they were waiting for a reply from them. Her husband has a family that helps them a little bit, but she is hoping to get some work so they can have a better life. She carries a big scar inside her, she kept calling the trafficking experience her 'black life'.

The quality of life for all seven participants appears to be dire with not much help from the government. All the women stated to be in a bad financial situation besides Katrin who is working too many hours just to cover her basic needs. They all appear to have unresolved psychological issues with no support from anyone. Out of the five women who come from developing countries, one got married to a Cypriot man (Sara) and the other four (Katrin, Emily, Joy and Marian) applied for asylum refugee status.

## 6.6    Conclusion

This chapter has presented the stories of seven women who were trafficked in Cyprus for commercial sex. Some participants' stories are overwhelming and furthermore, all were stories of abuse and abasement of their dignity and human rights. Most participants wanted to emigrate for a better life for them and their loved ones and all of them were deceived and coerced in activities that they disapproved of and that were against their principles and convictions. Many were threatened either by being sent to jail because they were illegal or by their families being told that they were prostitutes and slept with men for money. In most cases, their personal documents were confiscated and generally they were forced to either work in a cabaret or a flat / house and offer sexual services to customers. All participants were abused sexually and psychologically and had a lot of physical and psychological health issues in their lives after the trafficking situation.

All participants were satisfied with the Anti-trafficking Police but almost none were satisfied with the social services and any other government service. They were all pleased, though, with the help the NGOs offered them, some even stating that if the NGOs did not exist they would have never left the trafficking situation or they would have never felt better and hopeful again. According to the participants' stories, at the time of their trafficking there was not enough help from the government. They stated that they were not explained their rights and they were not given the necessary attention. As far

as their needs are concerned, most of them felt alone especially after their court case was completed. In addition, most of the participants reported that the social services only helped them financially and even that was not enough because the various issues they faced could not be handled with money. They needed psychological support and that was not adequately offered to them. Summing up, what the participants needed was housing, food, financial aid, an opportunity to work and psychological support so that they could have a chance of having a future for them and their children. According to the findings of this study, almost none of the participants' needs were fully met.

# CHAPTER 7: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

## 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings from in-depth interviews with representatives from both government and non-government services, who are involved in tackling trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and protecting the victims. The presentation of the findings will address the research questions of this study which refer to the way the participants (key stakeholders) perceive trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, the weaknesses and strengths of the government of Cyprus regarding social policy and social work practice and their opinion on how the government can improve these policies and practices.

In Table 7.1, all the organisations that participated in this study are presented indicating the representatives' names, gender, age, and the position they hold in the service where they are employed. All participants are women and most of them have been dealing with trafficking issues for the duration of one to four years only. Their gender and years, during the time they were involved in the trafficking issue, are two components that may affect the findings. However, the services in Table 7.1, are the services with the biggest part in tackling the phenomenon in Cyprus including KISA (NGO), which did not agree to take part and Cyprus Stop Trafficking (NGO). Its founder, Mrs Androulla Christofidou, was the first person the researcher interviewed. Mrs Christofidou was very willing to share her experiences and opinion on the matter but mostly through her writings, since she has been writing since the beginning of the organisation, in the form of essays, letters to politicians, state services, ministries, other organisations, whether local or European, that are involved in human trafficking, and articles that she published through an online newspaper 'GNOMI'. Most of the information in this chapter that comes

from Mrs Androulla derives from her official writings, therefore, a documentary analysis is utilised.

**Table 7.1:    Participants' (Key stakeholders) description**

| No. | Organisations | State or NGO | Participants representatives | Gender | * Years of experience with sex trafficking | Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ombudsman's Office | State | Thekla Demetriadou | F | 8 years | Officer of the authority against discriminations and the authority for the independent practice of human rights |
| 2 | Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings – Police | State | Antri Louka | F | 4 years | Sergeant - Forensic Psychologist |
| 3 | Social Welfare Services | State | Marina Eftymiadou | F | 4 years | Administrative officer on social policy |
| 4 | Ministry of Interior - Directorate of Migration, Asylum and European Affairs | State | Tania Charalambidou | F | 1 year | Administrative officer for trafficking issues |
| 5 | Civil Registry and Migration Department | State | Panayiota Fotiou | F | 1 year | Administrative officer |
| 6 | Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies | NGO | Jossie Christodoulou | F | 10 years | Policy Coordinator |
| 7 | **Cyprus Stop Trafficking | NGO | Androulla Christofidou - Henriques | F | 10 years | Founder and Honorary President |
| 8 | Caritas Cyprus | NGO | Gosia Chrysanthou | F | 8 years | Nicosia Migrant Centre Coordinator |
| 9 | Wellspring Association - Room of Hope (project) | NGO | Sanna Korpela | F | 1 year | Project Manager / Psychosocial support specialist |
| 10 | Future World Centre | NGO | Fatima Islam | F | 3 years | Social Worker |

| | |
|---|---|
| * | The years of experience with sex trafficking are up to the point of the interviews which were conducted in September – November of 2016. |
| ** | Most of the data analysed by Mrs Christofidou was derived from her articles and essays that she published in 'GNOMI' online newspaper and emailed to all the Cyprus Stop Trafficking members. |

This chapter takes into consideration and the fact that in Cyprus, the major government and NGOs' efforts for tackling trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and protecting the victims only started ten years ago (2007), even though the phenomenon appeared long before. This could mitigate the weaknesses reported further in this chapter. According to the TIP Reports, throughout the years Cyprus has shown that it is improving its efforts to at least have met the basic standards, however the way the efforts of each country are assessed is very ambiguous and this is the researcher's critique of it. The way the information is collected by each country is not very objective since there are no common tools that are used for all countries to evaluate their policies, services and actions.

## 7.2 Role and actions of services

In this section, the role and actions of services will be presented as the representative interviewees have described them. The findings of this section will be compared with the roles and responsibilities written and publicised either in the legislation or the National Referral Mechanism which is mentioned in this chapter, in chapter four and also discussed in chapter eight.

### 7.2.1 Ombudsman's Office

Before the legislation, concerning the prosecution of the clients was amended in 2014, the Ombudsman's Office contributed to recording voice messages for a radio station. In addition, they performed training to health education teachers who were involved in teaching issues of sexual education and gender issues in all cities of Cyprus; their position on the matter is also uploaded on their website. The educational part for tackling sex trafficking is very important to them. In 2015, the focus of the Ombudsman Office's educational training was on the educational system and on male public servants, and it targeted the information of the teachers on criminalisation of the sex trafficking services.

Furthermore, according to Mrs Demetriadou, the Office encouraged the government to send for training mainly male public servants, however two women also participated, who expressed a more conservative attitude and perception towards prostitution and women in prostitution. These specific women were more demeaning towards the women in prostitution and did not seem to have a problem with men using the services of prostitutes. One of the women actually said that her sons felt the need to go and use the services of a prostitute because they were men and they had sexual needs which they needed to satisfy.

Mrs Demetriadou stated that the Ombudsman's Office was proposed to be the external evaluator of the trafficking situation in Cyprus. If that happens, then they will have all the necessary statistical data available on the matter and they will have a clearer perception on what is going on in Cyprus as far as trafficking is concerned.

### 7.2.2   Office for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings – Police

The Office started its operation in 2004 and, inter alia, it is responsible for collecting, processing, analysing and using intelligence concerning human trafficking. It also acts as the coordinator for other police departments that are involved in operations aiming to combat human trafficking. Its members participate in operations and are the first people that usually come in contact with the victims and continue to have direct contact with them until the end of their court cases. In addition, the Office keeps a database and statistical records of all forms of trafficking, it participates in public awareness campaigns and collaborates with other state services and NGOs, both foreign and local, related to human trafficking and, along with the Cyprus Police Academy, it organises and performs training programmes for police members.

According to Sergeant Louca, the Office's undercover operations were put on hold for a period of time because the Ombudsman and an NGO had complained about how the use of a collaborator can victimise the victim or potential victim. However, the attorney general decided that the operations were being done the right way and so they started again. In order to make sure that there would not be any more complaints, the Office were very careful with how they gathered their intelligence prior to the operation.

Sergeant Louca contended that with the help of these operations and the arrest of traffickers as well as removal of victims from the criminal network, the network loses its balance for at least a "short" period of time until the traffickers and victims are replaced. She also notes that by collaborating with EUROPOL and the possibility of information exchange, the transportation of people to other countries becomes more difficult. So, the network is affected. However, she states that, most probably, the networks will move or take a different form/type of exploitation and this can be seen on a European level which makes their work more difficult and even harder to get to the root of the problem thus making it disappear completely.

### 7.2.3 Social Welfare Services

According to Mrs Efthimiadou, SWS are responsible for providing all the necessary information to the identified victims who are included in the legislation, the support that they can have, ie who provides the support, the financial support available from the state and with which NGO they can collaborate. SWS can provide the state shelter. Mrs Efthimiadou stated that one of the most important roles the SWS has is to connect the victims with other services for instance health services, educational / training programmes, office of labour etc. She states that by connecting them with other services or programmes then their socialisation is achieved and that is very important for them. So, recapitulating, when victims are identified by the police, a social worker is appointed to them and they are immediately helped with any necessary medical exams, hence having access to medical services, then the social worker will help them register with the labour office so they

can have access to the labour force. If the victim wishes to learn a language, then the social worker will help them register for language lessons. Mrs Efthimiadou noted that to a certain degree, all the aforementioned responsibilities of a social worker have been applied but it depends on each case.

Mrs Efthimiadou reported that there is a generic policy for welfare officers' work. They do a bit of everything. They have been through various seminars and training for human trafficking issues, ie awareness, info on how to locate victims and what they need after they are identified and of course knowledge of the relative legislation. She stated that all welfare officers were trained concerning the new provisions of the legislation and that those who work in the districts are trained more by having a priority in further training or seminars about the issue.

The SWS have also prepared a draft of regulations for the operation of shelters for women identified as having been trafficked. The draft was sent to the Minister of Interior who then sent it to the legal service for legislative review. It will then return to the Minister and will be submitted to the cabinet and then to the Parliament for voting. Mrs Efthimiadou stated that the regulations concern the operation of any shelter with the minimum standards of operation that derive from good practices and guidelines existing in the EU. The regulations do not include clauses for any specialised programmes for the victims; they only include the very basic standards like space, number of population cared for, hygiene issues etc.

According to Mrs Efthimiadou, the SWS can also intervene in policymaking. There is cooperation with other ministries where their opinion and suggestions are heard. She believes that if there is a political will, then things can change.

### 7.2.4 Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior is the national coordinator for tackling human trafficking. The Minister has the supervision of all the actions that are implemented for tackling human trafficking through the implementation of the national action plan. Furthermore, the Minister oversees the multidisciplinary coordinating group for human trafficking (which is mentioned in chapter 4 in more detail). She or he approves or disapproves, accordingly, the permit visas to identified victims or recognises the safe repatriation of a victim and he also designates four NGOs that can participate in the multidisciplinary group. Mrs Charalambidou's role is to observe the implementation of the national action plan, be in constant communication with the services, ministries, departments that are participating in the multidisciplinary coordinating group, and call for the meetings of the group. In addition, Mrs Charalambidou's department is the appointed department for implementing the designated budget for the funding of the various actions. For example, they are responsible for the planning of the educational training for all the officers and the conducting and funding of informative and awareness campaigns.

Mrs Charalambidou, along with her supervisor, is responsible for the Ministry's agenda and beyond the coordination and human trafficking issue, she deals with other matters of the Ministry. Mrs Charalambidou states that the ideal situation would be for only one person to be in charge of dealing with the human trafficking issues which was actually the case until March (2016) where one officer was implicitly responsible for this issue but for personal reasons she asked to be moved to another department. However, she is doing her job until they find another person to replace her. It is possible, though, that they will leave the job to Mrs Charalambidou and relieve her of other duties.

Lastly, the Ministry of Interior has drafted a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) where all the services' roles, responsibilities and procedures are portrayed and described separately.

### 7.2.5 Civil Registry and Migration Department

According to Mrs Fotiou, the role of the Civil Registry and Migration Department is to receive the application forms for residence permits from identified victims and issue or renew their permits. A written report is sent by the police to the department prior to receiving the application forms so that the department is aware of the victim's status. The jurisdiction of the department results from the relating legislation. The permits are in the form of a plastic card and have an expiration date of one year as opposed to six months in the past. This change came about in February 2016. Prior to that, the permits were in the form of a pink slip. Mrs Fotiou said that the new card allows the victims to have free access to the labour force. The process is much easier now because there is only one card issued instead of a permit that had to change each time the victim's status changed.

Mrs Fotiou explains that the process for the permit to get approved is through the Director of the department. As soon as they receive the written report from the police and the application form, then it is sent to the Director. The application is completed only once and is saved. Mrs Fotiou contends that within a day the victims have their permits. She carried on saying that if the Director is abroad for work, then they cannot give the permit since it must only be approved by the Director but a type of a receipt is given that victims can use in order to receive other services like health services and carry on with getting what they need. The permit will then be given to them as soon as the Director returns to Cyprus. She also states that there are specific officers appointed to assist victims of trafficking and they rarely change. She also reports that the officers have went through training a year ago which was conducted by the Ministry of Interior and that another series of training will be conducted in 2018.

### 7.2.6 Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

The MIGS's interest in sex trafficking, as Mrs Christodoulou stated, derived from Oxana Rancheva's death whose case became well known since it is the

one which brought global attention to Cyprus, and consequently the government of Cyprus was prosecuted and penalised for the mishandling of the case. MIGS started with a mapping in an effort to understand what the situation in Cyprus was regarding sex trafficking especially in relation to policies and legislations. In addition, Mrs Christodoulou stated that the institute is trying to come up with specific key recommendations on how to change policies and legislations. Hence, their main role, initially, was to provide as much information as possible to society, policy makers and other key stakeholders regarding the situation of sex trafficking thus suggesting specific recommendations and finding ways to lobby in order to pass the specific recommendations as policies and legislations. Mrs Christodoulou has added that now they are also involved in updating information from research and informing everyone who needs to know. Furthermore, through research, they organise and conduct training, awareness raising campaigns, seminars, conferences, and basically lobbying and advocacy. In her own words "we try to get new information on how now trafficking is working, provide this and analyse this knowledge, break it down, see where the weaknesses are and try to improve them".

MIGS was also a member of the multidisciplinary coordinating group of the Ministry of Interior from 2008 until 2016 however they decided to not participate further because, according to Mrs Christodoulou, they felt that they were not treated as equal partners. To explain it in her own words, Mrs Christodoulou said:

> We felt that we have been used by the state so that they can complete a checklist they have; for example, GRETA suggests that the government should work closely with NGOs, so how many NGOs do we have in the multidisciplinary coordinating group? Three? (tick off). The new directive we have to transpose it? [sic] (tick off).

Mrs Christodoulou noted that they have no problem in collaborating with the government and if anything is asked of them to be done, they will do it if they

can, but she said that they saw no meaning in being in the multidisciplinary group.

### 7.2.7 Cyprus Stop Trafficking (CST)

Cyprus Stop Trafficking is collaborating with other human rights organisations in an effort to combat human trafficking. Its aim is to provide the victims with social and financial support (satisfying their basic needs but also their need for socialisation) and in collaboration with Future World Centre, psychological and legal support. The organisation is also actively involved in bringing about changes in policies and legislations, even through the use of an activist's approach (Mrs Christofidou organises protests outside the Ministry of Interior until her opinion is heard and taken seriously). The organisation has also organised and conducted seminars in the army camps all over Cyprus, with the approval of the Ministry of Defence, to educate young soldiers about sex trafficking. Through this effort, they are trying to teach them, the young men, compassion and respect for the victims and women, in general, even if they are foreigners and poor. It is also explained to them that women who work in cabarets are not prostitutes and that most of them were deceived and forced into prostitution and are held against their will. Mrs Christofidou stated that the men they are teaching have now stopped saying "they are all prostitutes and they knew what they were going to be doing" and she said this alone gives them courage to continue. Futhemore, Mrs Christofidou wrote that since 2008 they have been collaborating with a radio station called 'ASTRA' and the past few years with the online newspaper 'GNOMI' for awareness raising regarding human trafficking.

### 7.2.8 Caritas Cyprus

Caritas Cyprus is an organisation that works and helps vulnerable groups of people and according to Mrs Chrysanthou, they work a lot with refugees, students, agriculture workers, domestic workers, victims of trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. Caritas Cyprus can provide accommodation, food, transport, orientation on where to go and what type of help they can ask

for, and help with filling in forms for any type of aid from the government or other organisations.

### 7.2.9  Room of Hope

Room of Hope is a project under the Wellspring Organisation in collaboration with a Finnish Organisation "Free a Victim". According to Mrs Korpela, who is the project manager, the project offers work training, ie hand craft, jewellery, sewing and psychosocial support and sometimes they might help victims with escorting them to various services when needed. It only helps women victims of trafficking and they would like to support more refugees, asylum seekers and generally women who are in vulnerable situations. Mostly, it is for women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation who are not supported by the government financially.

### 7.2.10 Future World Centre

Future World Centre is a non-profit organisation which consists of various units aiming to design and implement projects that promote the culture of peace and reconciliation in Cyprus. Mrs Islam has been a member and a social worker of the Humanitarian Affairs Unit which has been funded under the UN Unit for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (URVT) since 2006. According to Mrs Islam, the victims of trafficking, who they help, come through their collaboration with Cyprus Stop Trafficking and Caritas Cyprus organisations who are the two main NGOs that play a big role in assisting victims of trafficking in Cyprus. Her responsibilities, as a social worker, consist of the initial assessment on whether the referred cases can be classified as torture survivors, which depends on the context, experience and how they experienced it. Then if they can be identified within torture definition of the URVT, which uses a lot of emphasis on sexual and gender based violence, they will be eligible for their rehabilitation services. Many victims receive psychological counselling, legal support and if they are also applying for asylum, then many of them are classified as asylum seekers. Hence, they

receive social counselling and other support as torture survivors and as asylum seekers or refugees at a later stage.

## 7.3 National Action Plan (NAP) and services/participants' perception of it

The NAP for the Coordination of Actions to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings is formed by the multidisciplinary coordinating group which is coordinated by the Ministry of Interior. All the members of the group are responsible for suggesting and implementing their own actions. The first NAP was drawn up in 2001. The next NAP of 2010-2012 was replaced by the NAP of 2013-2015 and later on, by the NAP of 2016-2018 which is currently being implemented.

Generally, most of the participants have said that the NAPs are repetitive since most of the actions are not implemented. Mrs Efthimiadou, from the Social Welfare Services, reported that the reason actions are not implemented is not due to lack of funding (there is enough funding for each ministry and each NAP) but the problem lies in the understaffed services and departments meaning there are not enough employees to support, implement or evaluate the actions. She also stated that there are no tools to supervise the implementation of the national action plan. On the other hand, the representative from the Ombudsman's Office, Mrs Demetriadou, predicates that there is a cultural attitude against usefulness of making effective decisions in Cyprus. She said that:

> It concerns not only the public sector but generally the management of the follow up procedures of the decisions that are agreed upon. It is not by chance that the 'task force' issue is brought up. Task force means directedness, the direct support of the victims, the direct communication between the various services involved. If this means that people, who do not carry a culture of procrastination, should get

involved (in making effective decisions), then maybe it is a matter of human personalities but I think that firstly it is about political will.

The representative from the Ombudsman's Office, Mrs Demetriadou, posits that the multidisciplinary coordinating group is not functioning adequately and that it should include all the services that make decisions, equally, including the NGOs that take part. This is the reason that, according to Mrs Christodoulou, the MIGS has not renewed their membership in the group. Mrs Christodoulou contends that the problem with the NAPs lies in the fact that they are not based on a strategy. She said:

> What is our aim as a state? What do we want to tackle? We should have only five to ten activities maximum with a specific budget, assessment indicators, ie how we are going to evaluate these actions in order to have an action plan … let's touch base, let's re-evaluate ourselves, let's think what we consider a priority and let's work together on that.

It seems that they all realise the existence of implementation difficulties with the NAPs and that the reasons could vary from understaffed departments, lack of communication, as well as evaluation tools and coordination of common vision and strategy. Nonetheless, Mrs Charalambidou's statement about the existence and availability of funds for the implementation of the NAP's actions is very important.

## 7.4    Services' position on human trafficking legislation

It is agreed by almost all the participants that the legislation has improved especially with its last amendment in 2014. However, there is still more room for improvement. The gaps were located and reported to the multidisciplinary group and suggestions, for more amendments, were given by all members. The gaps of the latest reformation concern the penalties – who is prosecuted and how – ambiguity on prostitution article, and the criminalisation of the

client. Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's office, stated that the issue with the legislation focuses on its weak implementation and she suggested that somebody should conduct research to evaluate the legislation's adequacy. Mrs Efthimiadou, from the SWS, agrees that there is room for improvement on the implementation of the legislation and not so much on its structure. She thinks, though, that a large percentage of the legislation is implemented as it is.

Sergeant Louca, of the anti-trafficking unity of the police, contends that there is an issue with prostitution and that in Cyprus it is not prohibited and yet not allowed. There is a gap in the legislation and traffickers are taking advantage of that gap in the apartments. She predicates that it is not illegal for a woman to practice prostitution alone in a flat but a person who rents 5 flats and has 5 women working for them and making profit out of it, is illegal, therefore the women will say they work alone so the police cannot arrest them. Furthermore, Sergeant Louca stated that the current legislations, regarding criminalisation of the client, has weaknesses because clients are not prosecuted unless they admit that they were aware the woman they had bought for sex was a victim of trafficking which is very hard to prove in court or for them to admit it. Sergeant Louca stated that in order to be able to catch the traffickers without the clients going to court (since they would never be prosecuted as they would never admit they were aware the woman they were with was a victim), the police prefer to work with the client by asking them for details on how they arranged the meeting with a woman as well as any other valuable information in exchange for not being prosecuted. This is the reason, Sergeant Louca posits, there have been no prosecutions so far for any client. On this note, Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, ascertained that there is no one who is specialised or trained enough to prove that somebody was aware of what the situation was with the victim. She said:

> We do not have any one who is trained with the right tools and right
> sets of questions in order to be able to prove that so we do have a gap
> in the legislation and we are aware of that. This issue was faced by

many member states. It was requested by the legal service to erase the "can reasonably assume" part so whoever was arrested for being with a victim of trafficking, had to be penalised. However, this change needs to go through the normal process until it reaches Parliament.

Mrs Charalambidou continued to report that they asked all the members of the multidisciplinary group to send suggestions regarding the legislation, especially the police and SWS who are more involved. She said that they took the suggestions seriously and along with their own suggestions they moved on in amending the legislation and sending it through the long process, ie approval, legislative check, the cabinet and finally the parliament for voting.

Mrs Christodoulou was able to give a few more details on the legislation's changes that have been sent for approval and said that under the amended article, concerning the demand part, there is a specific clause where traffickers will also be prosecuted if it passes. In more detail, the people that will be prosecuted under the new amended article are the traffickers that recruit, put women in prostitution and take advantage of the victims in any sort of way, the employer who charges the services the victim must provide, the owner of the venue the victims are exposed to, and anyone else who is involved in the chain from which they receive money and make a profit. Mrs Christodoulou contended that it is necessary to have a precise interpretation of the concept 'demand' in the legislation. In addition, she also reported that the penalties also increased from ten years to life imprisonment for the demand of a child and 100,000 euros instead of 80,000 euros. For adults, she wasn't very sure but believed that it changed from three years to life imprisonment because it was compared to the sentence of a rapist, which if not life imprisonment, then probably ten years and from 15,000 euros to 50,000 euros. Mrs Christodoulou said that if the legislation is amended, then it will be a huge victory. However, she also noted that if that happens, then a lot of money will be needed to organise awareness raising campaigns.

There is an agreement by all the services that the legislation has improved and that it still needs to improve in some of its articles. They all agreed that the article concerning the demand and the prosecution of the client was weak and posed a lot of difficulties and ambiguity therefore it needed to be changed and that the clause "can reasonably assume a woman is a victim" should be removed and so all men who are arrested for buying sex, be prosecuted. If the legislation is amended, then as Mrs Christodoulou stated, it will be up to the police to implement it and that will be "tricky". The implementation of the legislation is still a matter which will probably be a quandary to all.

## 7.5 Services' position on the 4Ps (Prevention, Prosecution, Protection and Partnership)

Based on the data gleaned from the interviews with the participants, it is ascertained that the approach utilised by most, concerns the protection of the victims and the prosecution of the traffickers. Actions and policies pertaining to the prevention phase are obscured. It seems that the government of Cyprus and NGOs are both focused on implementing a victims' and human rights' approach. The prevention actions are limited to minimal awareness campaigns that are conducted by the state and some campaigns, seminars and conferences that are organised and conducted by NGOs. These actions focus only on informing what human trafficking is about without reifying the real issues and reasons that human trafficking takes place. Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's office said:

> We often tout to the Ministry of Interior that the trafficking issue should be in its top priorities but it seems that there is not adequate willingness for implementing prevention measures, they are all based on direct interventions, or they think that it concerns legislative sanctions. But it is not only about tackling it after it happens, it is about violation of human rights to the maximum when someone is exploited, hence the priority of the state should be to prevent victimisation of persons.

Moreover, regarding prosecution of traffickers, the convictions are only a few every year (see Table 3.3 in Chapter 3). Segeant Louca contends that prosecution of traffickers is not as effective because of the lack of specialisation of lawyers and judges and the fact that court cases can last for a few years. Hence the number of convictions every year are only few because the rest are still under investigation. In addition, Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's office, stated that so far there have been no ratifications in Cyprus besides the one case concerning Oxana Rancheva's death. Regarding this matter, she said:

> The fact that no other ratifications took place does not mean that the state is not accountable. And as it is observed through the extensive literature on the matter, every time an action plan is formed and takes into consideration everything that the European organisations have pointed out, then the fact that plan after plan consists of similar actions because the implementation of previous ones was weak, at some point it will have an impact on Cyprus.

As far as protection of the victims is concerned, the reformation of the legislation in 2014 (Law 60(I)/2014) aimed to assure the protection of the victims by giving them the right to stay in Cyprus due to an immediate approval of a resident's permit. The legislation has many clauses assuring that the victims are protected however some of them are not implemented. The reasons for the system's weaknesses in protecting the victims and the reasons the law is not implemented adequately, will be analysed in the next point (7.6.6).

Furthermore, according to Sergeant Louca, the police are usually the first contact that the victims have. She stated that, as a unit, they have drafted the victim identification manual (VIM) which was created by gleaning all the necessary information from different European manuals and the Cyprus legislation. The VIM was modified due to the law amendment and was an

opportunity to also take into consideration a lot of other indicators deriving from international organisations, such as bibliography for victims, the psychological reaction and state they might be in during the interviews and how that can make the police's work more difficult when they are trying to identify the victims. The Sergeant reported that the manual is only used by the specific unit which is responsible for the victim's identification. She carried on explaining the process that a victim must follow. According to the Law, the identified victims are not deported whether they want to testify or not. If the victims wish to return to their country, the cost is covered by the state, the police will evaluate whether it is dangerous for the victim to return and the social welfare services will assure the safe return by contacting the relevant NGOs in their country so that someone will be at the airport to pick them up. Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior adds that an assessment from the mental health services might be requested upon suspicion of psychological issues. She also stated that the Minister is the one who approves any decisions concerning the victims. Moreover, Mrs Efthimiadou, from the SWS, contends that if the victims wish to stay, their status gives them access to all their rights: protection, support services, financial support, access to health services, education, training, anything that would empower the victim for her social integration and protection from re-victimisation. In addition, their rights are provided to them in printed form translated in their own language. Moreover, Mrs Efthimiadou noted that the police advise the victims to go to the shelter if they are in danger by their traffickers. There they can spend a month, with the possibility for renewal, to reflect and decide what they want to do. If they are not in danger, they can choose to stay outside the shelter where collaboration with NGOs takes place to help them find accommodation. There is also an instant approval for financial state support which every Cypriot citizen has access to if they live under the poverty line (in absolute poverty). Their permit also gives them access to the labour force. Mrs Charalambidou stated that it is up to the victims to find job on their own unless they are assisted by an NGO. She added that up to the point when they find a job, they receive financial help from the state.

Furthermore, Sergeant Louca also stated that the victims have the right to apply for compensation at the end of their court case. Regarding their compensation rights, they are informed both from the anti-trafficking unit of the police as well as the Social Welfare Services. According to Sergeant Louca, there has only been one lawsuit for compensation so far and it is still under trial. The reason that Sergeant Louca posited for not having more claims for compensation was that other victims are still at the beginning stages of applying for compensation and have not reached the court yet. Of all seven victims that were interviewed for this study, none were aware of their right to compensation and so none actually applied. There is ambiguity whether the victims are informed about their compensation rights and by who and there is definitely no data on why they might choose not to apply for it.

Moreover, Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, predicated that the concept of compensation is not clear yet. She stated:

> The victim has the right to civil compensation meaning she can sue the trafficker and claim compensation from them but the state compensation is not clear yet. To be honest, we have not looked at it intensively yet. I have asked from the other state members to send me information about what they do for state compensation and, at first glance, many state members do not have it and if they do, then it is an indicative maximum amount which does not reflect the magnitude of damage that was inflicted upon the victims. The state compensation is very difficult because how can you put a price on a victim's suffering? At least the victims are immediately eligible for the monthly financial support from the state.

Succinctly, it appears that all the safety clauses for the protection and the best interest of the victims of trafficking are included in the amended legislation and all the necessary services are well aware of them. The victims have the right to stay in Cyprus and work whatever type of work is possible for them, be protected, get any type of support such as financial and psychological support, health services, education and anything that would

empower them. They also have the right to compensation from both their trafficker and the state. However, it is stated that even though the claims for compensation from the traffickers have started taking place, the claims for compensation from the state is still unclear.

## 7.6    System's weaknesses

Through the interviews with the participants, from the various services that take part in tackling human trafficking in Cyprus, quite a few weaknesses have surfaced. According to the participants, the system that exists for tackling the issue of human trafficking in Cyprus and for protecting the victims is not sufficient. There is lack of coordination and collaboration amongst the services and the services are understaffed which causes problem with the implementation of the legislation and the NAPs. There is a lack of services' evaluation in general; consequently, the operation of the only state shelter for women victims of trafficking is weak. There is corruption of officers and procedure opacity, lack of financial, legal, social and psychological support for the victim. There is also a lack of first line officers, lawyers and judges' training, cultural impediments within the services, and cultural perceptions on prostitution that negatively affect the attitudes towards an efficient approach and policy.

### 7.6.1   Weak government administration

The participants reported four areas where the government administration failed to work; consequently, the trafficking of women could not be tackled effectively. These areas concern: the lack of coordination and collaboration amongst the services, the services being understaffed hence the desired outcome not being produced, the lack of services' evaluation (without the evaluation the services cannot be improved) and finally the corruption of officers and procedure opacity.

Generally, it was noted from all the participants that there were some issues of collaboration and coordination in the past between services but they have improved with time and experience. However, they all agree that there are still some difficulties and that there is still room for improvement. Mrs Demetriadou from the Ombudsman's office, stated:

> Two to three years ago, a lot of issues of bad coordination and denial of taking responsibilities would reach our offices from some services indicating that the role of each one was not clear. Things have improved though. From the moment, the office of combating trafficking in persons increased its members by hiring interdisciplinary staff, and from the moment professionals in the social welfare services, office of labour, Ministry of Health presented real interest in the trafficking phenomenon, I think that the response and coordination has improved and a follow up is also underway. Nevertheless, we still think that improvement in the collaboration between services is still not adequate. With the creation of the National Report Mechanism, the responsibilities of each service have become much clearer, however, only time will show whether the implementation of the NRM will be successful and adequate.

Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, believes the collaboration with the other services, through the multidisciplinary group, is good even though there are some difficulties with some officers who do not fully comprehend what human trafficking is and that is why the Ministry of Interior is planning a series of training sessions for all the officers who are involved in the human trafficking issue. In addition, Mrs Charalambidou stated that she is responsible for making all the necessary contacts with the members of the group and collaborating with them. She stated that there are no tools or platforms of collaboration so she personally has to do everything by phone and emails in order to help the Minister coordinate the multidisciplinary group. Mrs Charalambidou contends that if a matter is not resolved on a personal

level with the qualified officer of a department she is collaborating with, then the issue is taken to a ministerial level where all involved ministers meet to discuss and resolve the issue.

Mrs Efthimiadou admitted, on their behalf, that there were some issues with the financial support that the SWS were providing to the victims. In order to get it, they needed an approval for their status which took a long time, but now that they get their status approved immediately, there are no such issues anymore. She said that there is an immediate briefing from one service to the other so that the process of approval and financial support is direct. Mrs Efthimiadou also contends that the collaboration between the SWS and the NGOs is very good and very important since the NGOs are complementing the work of the SWS. However, Mrs Chrysanthou, from Caritas Cyprus, who is collaborating with the SWS for the protection and assistance of the victims of trafficking, argues that collaboration is very difficult because communication with the social workers is usually time consuming since they are overloaded with other cases and do not answer their phones. She also stated that they have to do everything on their own. In fact, she said they are doing everything that the social workers, from the SWS, should be doing to help the victims. Nonetheless, Mrs Chrysanthou bestows that the collaboration with the SWS has improved and that SWS have recognised the value of the NGOs and what they provide and that they rely heavily on them which she admits gives them a little bit of power to negotiate.

Sergeant Louca predicates that there is a lack of collaboration and coordination amongst all services that are involved in the trafficking issue. Their anti-trafficking unit acts on a very practical level and they depend on the collaboration with other services to be able to do their job efficiently. She said:

> Each department and service does not want to admit that they have these difficulties and problems. Each service thinks that the work it does is correct and that is how they continue. They do not accept suggestions from others, nor any alternatives. This makes it harder

because even when we ask for a meeting with an officer, there is a defensive attitude, for example, 'you are blaming me and I'm just following the right procedures'. And so the situation stays as it is.

Mrs Chrysanthou, from Caritas Cyprus, stated almost the same thing as Sergeant Louca. She stated: "each department works separately, they have their own agendas, their own jobs to do and they try to do them well, and nobody is pulling it all together in order to have a holistic approach".

In addition, both Mrs Chrysanthou and Mrs Islam argued that victims are sent from one department to the other, getting different papers and forms which they must have otherwise they risk being sent away. Mrs Islam argues that even the authorities under the same ministry, refuse to communicate with each other for an issue that could be solved with one phone call.

Participants from all the NGOs (Caritas Cyprus, Future World Centre, MIGS, Room of Hope) all predicate that they are there when the government services need them but the government services refuse to help. They all feel that the government's position and interventions are superficial because they are simply ticking off a list that aims to appease the UN, US, and EU demands on the unified effort to tackle human trafficking. They also all stated that amongst them (the NGOs) the collaboration is excellent.

Through the interviews, with all the participants, a difference of opinion regarding the collaboration amongst them was noticed. With the exception of the police anti-trafficking unit, the rest of the government services believe that the collaboration and coordination is good with room for improvement. Whereas the NGOs and the police anti-trafficking unit believe that, even though the collaboration amongst some services has improved, there are a lot of difficulties still evident in the collaboration with the government services and the coordination of them. In comparison with the participants (victims) of this study, it is ascertained that the collaboration amongst the government services was absent. They faced a lot of difficulties trying to sort their paper

work while moving from one department to the other. They all stated that they felt helpless as far as the services were concerned.

*Services are understaffed:*

The difficulties with the understaffed services were mentioned by all participants. It is something that the participants from both carriers (government and NGOs) are aware of and realise that it causes many apparent impediments in a chain of malfunctioned procedures. Mrs Efthimiadou, from the SWS, explains that because of the financial crisis in 2012, the government had to seize the opening of new job positions and a lot of people were forced into early retirement, consequently the hierarchy in the various departments was broken so the ones who were left had to do all the work that unfortunately increased.

The understaffed services cause various problems according to the participants. Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, posits that the NAP actions were not implemented because of not enough people to work on it. Mrs Fotiou, from the Civil Registry and Migration Department, states that the ineffective administration pertains to the fact that of the 115 employees, 75-80% of them are secretarial officers and there is no primary secretary. She carried on saying that in the department there are two sectors, the population registry and the immigration sector and there should be two senior officers however there are none. Only her, her colleague and the Director who is a Deputy Director are there. Mrs Fotiou stated that there are a lot of structural weaknesses that have a negative impact on the way the department operates.

Mrs Efthimiadou, from the SWS, admitted that the welfare offices are overloaded with cases, more than they can handle, and that is why they have to prioritise them. Sergeant Louca, from the police anti-trafficking unit, agreed, by stating that the support of the victims of trafficking from the social workers depend on the severity of the case. She said: "each welfare officer is assigned with a lot more cases than they can handle so the victims of

trafficking are just included in their overall workload and it is up to the welfare officer to evaluate which of the cases are a priority."

Based on the findings, it was indicated that all participants understood it is not the employees' fault that there is not adequate collaboration, awareness and attitude towards the trafficking issue and the victims. It is because all the government services are understaffed. Mrs Korpela, from Room of Hope, put it nicely: "if you already have a huge workload, then one more victim of trafficking might just feel like more work."

*Lack of services' evaluation:*

Departmental or service evaluations are not performed in the government according to the participants. Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's office, states that the lack of departmental evaluation by the government is problematic. She asserted that the committees from GRETA and TIP Report and their office have repeatedly asked for such evaluations to be conducted but they never happened. Mrs Demetriadou predicates that an evaluation of the immigration department in particular, is as necessary as it is pertinent. According to Hodge (2014), social workers are ideally positioned to research and evaluate the outcomes but also the effectiveness of various programmes and interventions concerning the victims of trafficking. However, it seems that evaluation would be one more responsibility added to the myriad responsibilities social workers already have since it was stressed by all participants how understaffed the services are.

*Corruption of officers and procedure opacity*:

The participants, when asked about corruption within the system, did not hesitate to disclose their opinion and experience of it. Even though it was explained to them that they could dismiss any information they wanted, they carried on, making it appear like public knowledge.

Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's office, stated that the office did not receive any information about corruption besides the case of a police officer who had a house and used it for trafficking women for sex. It went publicly

however there has been no conclusion until today, it was silenced. Mrs Demetriadou asserts, though, that the collaboration of private job-search agencies that bring migrants to work and are the most vulnerable for sex and labour exploitation, with the Migration Department is very suspicious because the agencies always find ways to be a top priority and get their job done faster than others. She said: "if a person asks the same things individually, from the Civil Registry and Migration Department, they will not receive the same treatment, so I believe that corruption may be taking place. I believe that the procedures of the Civil Registry and Migration Department are obscured." Mrs Demetriadou claims the same is happening with lawyers who they get money from the migrants and the agencies to handle their cases by sending a letter to the Civil Registry and Migration Department. She stated that the Ombudsman's Office send the same letter to the department but get no results whereas the lawyers do. She said: "These 'under the table' actions need to be controlled and monitored by someone; someone needs research this matter." Succinctly, Mrs Demetriadou asserts that there is procedure opacity in the Civil Registry and Migration Department which makes the work of traffickers a lot easier and the work of other service providers a lot harder.

Mrs Fotiou, from the Civil Registry and Migration Department, asserts that they did have some people in the past whose opinions, on the matter, where a bit extreme but she thinks that these stances have now changed and the legislation has helped a lot, especially since the victims are now protected from deportation. She also ascertains that she and her colleague recently composed a unit, which is responsible for the reformation of the department. The department is now considered a priority of the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus and so it gets help from a company, through the EU, for the simplification and update (modernisation) of its procedures. In addition, she contends that they are at the beginning of the process of amending the immigration legislation. A lot has been done in the department recently, with the support of the presidency and the Ministry of Interior, aiming to improve the procedures and their image.

Sergeant Louca agrees with Mrs Demetriadou that corruption must exist in the state system specifically because of how migrants and immigrants come to the island, the way their visas are approved. She said:

> It has been noticed by us, through the various collaborations of the traffickers with state officers, how the victims come to Cyprus and get their visas, [the corruption] is apparent but there is no legal way to prove it or to go straight to the person facilitating the traffickers. We know that there are gaps in the Civil Registry and Migration Department, and in other police departments and welfare offices. It is just not easy to find out who is responsible for these gaps and collaborating with the traffickers.

Sergeant Louca ascertains that there is no control mechanism as far as trafficking is concerned. She believes that a control mechanism should be created so that everything concerning human trafficking should go through it, thus eliminating or at least decreasing the opacity of procedures. She does recognise the existence of the Ministry of Interior as the coordinator on human matters but she states that the effort on their behalf is buried in the hierarchy and bureaucracy that a claim needs to go through in order to finally reach the national coordinator.

### 7.6.2  Lack of specialised public officers' training

It was reported by the participants that the public officers did not receive specialised training concerning their work associated with the trafficking problem and the victims of trafficking. For example, the police officers did not receive training focused on how to interview victims of trafficking without re-traumatising them or the judges are not trained on trafficking cases which makes the police and the defence lawyer's job harder but also the victims' lives because they must wait a long time for their court cases to take place and a potential re-victimisation is at risk of happening since the lawyers and judges are not trained on how to protect the victims during the court procedures.

*Lack of first line officers' training:*

It is observed, by most participants, that the first line officers are in need of training so that they could be more sensitive and knowledgeable about human trafficking matters, approaches and procedures. Both Mrs Charalambidou, form the Ministry of Interior and Mrs Fotiou, from the Civil Registry and Migration Department, have asserted that the Ministry is planning to train all the first line officers who are involved in human trafficking using a more methodic and targeted approach. They contend that a similar type of training was carried out in 2016. Mrs Charalambidou stated that the Ministry of Interior will use the National Referral Mechanism to train all the first line officers who could potentially come in contact with a victim of trafficking, which means that they will be trained on how to refer a victim to the appropriate service so that they could be identified as a victim and therefore get the right assistance. She said that the Ministry is planning to train all the officers in all ministries who are involved in human trafficking.

*Lack of judges and lawyers' training:*

The judges and lawyers are not trained or specialised in human trafficking court cases. Sergeant Louca simply stated that there are no specialised judges or lawyers and also they are not even open to training for trafficking issues. They refused without giving a reason. She said that when the Ministry of Interior brought judges and attorney generals from abroad for a conference, the number of Cypriot judges who attended was very small. She contends that the judges who have gained some experience on trafficking cases have started to understand but the main issue is with the ones that receive a trafficking case for the first time. The lack of training and awareness by the judges and lawyers causes the delays of the court cases of victims of trafficking and consequently could take a few years to be completed. Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, has also stated the reluctance of judges to be trained. She asserts that they will only accept to be trained by another judge, so now the Ministry must locate a judge from another country who will be willing to come to Cyprus to train them.

### 7.6.3 Lack of support for the victims

According to the participants of this study, despite what the legislations or the NRM state, victims do not receive the support they need. As it is analysed below, the state shelter does not have any programmes / activities that will keep the victims busy and the financial, legal, social and psychological assistance is not adequate.

*Weak operation of the state shelter for women victims of trafficking:*
Initially, it should be noted that all participants admitted to the fact that the state shelter has many weaknesses in its operation. It is bestowed that it does offer protection especially for women in danger by their traffickers but they all stated that it does not provide anything more than that. Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's Office, ascertains that they had complaints concerning the government shelter's operation, the absence of programmes regarding creative activities for the victims, training and therapy. She stated that when they tried to confront the SWS, which is the accountable body for the operation of the shelter, about the complaints as well as the Ministry of Interior, the excuse they got was that it was for the victims' protection. Mrs Demetriadou said: "The public sector has a major reservation in collaborating with the private sector or giving an opportunity to persons that can help, I do not know why and what lies behind this… protection of victims? Absolute control? I am not sure."

Sergeant Louca, from the anti-trafficking unit, had a few things to discuss when she was asked about the operation of the shelter. The police officers are most probably the first people that victims meet, and if the police officers assess that the victim is in danger or needs some time to feel safe, to reflect before deciding what to do, they send them to the shelter. Sergeant Louca also argued that they are sent there so they can have time to recover and get stronger with the intention of reintegrating and being able to live on their own. She said:

While [the victims] are in the shelter [they] do not have anything to do, there is no activity available to them. We know that, at times, there are women who do not speak the same language and cannot do anything together. They do not have phones with them for their own safety from their traffickers. They do not have computers. They have TVs but most of the channels are in Greek. There are limited books. The officers, who are there, are there only for their basic needs, food and sleep. There is only a cook and a cleaner where instead there should be officers who could provide some sort of support to them.

The women in the shelter, according to Sergeant Louca, are allowed to leave the shelter for a small period of time in the afternoon one week after they are sent there, unless they are in danger by their traffickers. She reported that they collaborate with NGOs so that the women are escorted and if there is no one available, then they themselves take them out. Sergeant Louca denoted and said: "the shelter is the first place the women will have to stay in and they should be provided with psychological support and activities so that they keep their minds busy during the day." Mrs Chrysanthou, from Caritas Cyprus, agreed on a lot of the points the Sergeant stated and had a lot more to add since she is probably the one who most victims come in contact with after leaving the shelter and during their life thereafter.

Mrs Chrysanthou has met a lot of women, victims of trafficking, in the shelter and outside the shelter. She agreed, with the Sergeant, that the first people the victims see are the police officers. She disagrees with the fact that victims are kept as captives in the shelter for one week until the volunteers can visit them. She believes that that first week is the most important week for them where they need psychological support the most. She gave a very good example of a victim from Ukraine who she went to visit in the shelter and the victim was very confused. Mrs Chrysanthou communicated in the victim's language (she can speak Russian) and was able to answer all her questions, inform her of her rights, explain to her what was going to happen and what to expect and the victim seemed pleased. Mrs Chrysanthou said that when she

saw her next, the victim asked her exactly the same questions as if they had never had that long conversation the previous time. With this example, Mrs Chrysanthou was able to highlight the distress and psychological state these women are in and the need they have for psychological support from the start, something that she reports do not get adequately or at all in the first week. Mrs Chrysanthou, from her own experience, contends that all the victims want to leave the shelter because they feel oppressed (a word that the victims used to explain it to her) in the shelter. They told her that it feels like a prison and even worse than a prison because they have not committed any crime. She asserts that because this procedure feels like imprisonment, the victims lose their trust to the authorities from the very beginning.

The majority of the victims that participated in this study have also stated that they did not like it in the shelter and some used the word 'prison' too. They also said that they did not have anything to do, they did not have a phone to call their family and they did not see anyone besides the police officers and, on one occasion, the social worker who took them for their medical exams to the hospital. Mrs Chrysanthou and Sergeant Louca reported the same as the participants (victims), as far as the conditions in the shelter are concerned, that their passports and phones are confiscated until the end of their court case so they cannot get in touch with their families unless they ask to go to the police station and use the phone there. In addition, Mrs Chrysanthou predicates that there is lack of services and programmes in the shelter where women become depressed and in some cases, they end up on psychiatric medication because they are pressured by the police, who are trying to catch the trafficker, but there is no support for their ordeal of the victims while they are pressured by the police. She said:

> All they see is the police, nobody else is present there. And now of course the social welfare will tell you [they even] got programmes, I even saw the chart, they have Zumba, they have Greek classes, I am sorry but a woman who feels oppressed by the police is not going to go dancing, this is not an answer, this is a good beginning but it is not

enough. There should be a balance, if the police need to pressure the victims for information and to catch the traffickers, then better support should be provided to the victims.

The data from both participants (victims and key stakeholders) of this study indicates that the operation of the government shelter is problematic and does not provide anything more than safety to the victims of trafficking from their traffickers. It is denoted by the participants that psychological support should be provided to the victims from the beginning so that they could help themselves and the police in the best possible way and activities and programmes should be provided to them so that they could keep thier minds busy. It was also adamantly highlighted by Mrs Chrysanthou and the participants (victims) that the social worker's assistance is provided to the victims in the shelter.

*Lack of financial, legal, social and psychological support for the victims:*
The Ombudsman's Office, according to Mrs Demetriadou, received complaints from NGOs regarding the lack of financial, housing assistance and psychological support before and after the court proceeding. Mrs Efthimiadou, from the SWS, admitted that the state cannot offer the victims what they are entitled to and therefore the NGOs complement the state. She asserts that the state financially supports the NGOs but not adequately for what they do for the victims. It was noted that none of the NGOs that participated in this study received any financial aid from the government. Furthermore, both Mrs Efthimiadou and Mrs Charalambidou posit that collaboration protocols should be signed amongst the state and NGOs and most importantly amongst the SWS and the active NGOs on human trafficking.  In addition, Mrs Charalambidou stated that psychological support is not offered in the shelter but an effort is being made to provide it through the state mental health services whenever needed. She did also say that the psychological support is a matter that they encourage to be provided by NGOs through collaboration protocols with the government.

Mrs Chrysanthou shared some very interesting information, concerning the way the victims react to their situation, through her personal observation with victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. She wanted to portray the psychological state the victims are in when they are free from their traffickers but imprisoned in the shelter and their own minds. Their reaction, she denotes, depends on the place of origin and their culture. Hence their reaction in the shelter, whether they collaborate right away or in later stages or not at all, depends on their cultural experiences and personal needs. She notes that Bulgarian and Romanian women do not want to cooperate and want to return to their countries immediately. The reason is that they are too afraid of their traffickers and they do not want to testify because their families are threatened. The Vietnamese and the Philippinos that usually come as purported domestic workers, are more willing to collaborate because they paid money to get to Cyprus and they came to earn money in order to send back to their families, so their stay in the shelter means deprivation of a month's earnings. And lastly, Mrs Chrysanthou mentioned the Africans that are a very unique nationality because even though they do not have the financial pressure of sending money back home (even though many of them left their children there), many of them are young and unaccompanied minors and almost all of them have suffered more than the other nationalities. She ascertains that for most of them, the trafficking situation started when they were either raped at home, smuggled through borders, raped on the way and then continued to be raped in Cyprus. Mrs Chrysanthou asserts that because of their long suffering, the African victims possess fantastic survival skills but when all the needs are met and they feel safe, that is when they break down because they then realise what has actually happened to them. She contends that most of them resort to psychiatric medication because they cannot cope, consequently their psychological needs are tremendous because they go through cycles where they are fine, move on, find a job and then when the trauma reappears, they lose their jobs and they fall into depression and then get better again and so on. She stated that many of them have tried to commit suicide too. Mrs Chrysanthou contends that even though the psychological support has improved because Future World Centre provides

the victims with that as much as they can, the need for psychological support right from the beginning is crucial and the victims do not receive that.

Mrs Korpela who also experiences the suffering of the women after they leave the shelter, also agrees that they need the psychological support from the beginning. She also asserts that the women mostly need help with their everyday life; their basic needs when the money from the government has not started yet, during which the NGOs provide for them. She said that for a long time the victims do not know what is going to happen to them and so they need a lot of psychological and social support.

Furthermore, Mrs Chrysanthou argues that the victims have limited legal support as well. She contends that there are no lawyers specialised in trafficking and even if a victim does find the funds to pay the lawyers, she cannot trust them. She believes that the lawyers do not comprehend what a victim of trafficking is and what they have been through. So, if they do not understand, then they are not expected to win the case whether it is for compensation or any other claim. There is only one lawyer (a woman) who is more sensitive about the issue and Mrs Chrysanthou states that she does trust her but this lawyer is very busy and not very reliable.

The participants (victims) of this study confirm the above findings. They stated that not only did they not receive adequate psychological support but most of them did not receive any at all. However, most of them did receive social support from the NGOs and they were very content with the support offered to them.

### 7.6.4  Cultural impediments

Some cultural impediments were highlighted by the participants in regard to the way the services are operated and administered and the way public officers in Cyprus perceive prostitution. As it is analysed below, the services and the public officers are biased as far as gender is concerned and have also shown racist attitudes towards the foreigners. The participants believe

that these cultural impediments slow down the process of political and social change in Cyprus.

*Culture within the services:*

A certain culture within services can be considered as a weakness of the system when a majority of the personal opinions and perceptions of the representatives are similar regarding the existing culture. This makes the findings significant and the variable 'culture' important. Mrs Demetriadou, from the Ombudsman's Office, stated that "the weaknesses in the system exist not just because of lack of staff but also because of culture, meaning the idea that trafficking can be tackled only when there is one common task force from all the services, was not obvious from each service". She also contends that the common task force adopted and applied by all services is missing and this is what should be targeted.

Mrs Charalambidou from the Ministry of Interior, asserts that the officers in the various services have stereotypes concerning foreigners and that reflects the whole society. She said verbatim: "I do not want to blame any service but I do think that it is something that generally exists in our society and in our perceptions. All services must realise that you must see a person as a human being and not as an immigrant, or a European from a different country but as a human being and a potential victim".

In addition, Mrs Chrysanthou, from Caritas Cyprus, also contends that from her experience, specifically with the social workers from SWS, there is an attitude that could only derive from stereotypes and preconception about foreigners. She said that when they asked social workers why they are not responsible for the victims since this is what the legislation indicates, the social workers' response, in Mrs Chrysanthou's own words, was: "we do the same for them as we do for Cypriots, why should we do more for the victims of trafficking? We do not take Cypriots to the hospital so why should we take victims? We do not provide services in their houses; Cypriots come to our offices to receive them. We do not do it for other people, so why should we do

it for the victims?" She did explain, though, that social workers are working hard to interpret the legislation on how they see fit for them and the way they interpret the legislation is definitely affected by the lack of time too.

Mrs Christodoulou, from MIGS, preferred to describe an incident in order to portray the culture of politics and services in Cyprus. She said that MIGS started lobbying for the criminalisation of the use of services by victims of trafficking in 2007 and since then they have worked hard in creating networking, being members of other European networks such as the European Women's Lobby and trying to educate Cyprus by organising the first conference regarding demand in Cyprus but the Minister of Interior, at the time, asked them what demand had to do with trafficking. She stated that since 2007, 10 years later, demand has only just started being criminalised and that it was a success story for them but at the same time frustrating to think that it has taken almost a decade for people to understand it. Mrs Christodoulou contends that changes happen in Cyprus only for two reasons: (a) because there is a combination of people in key positions that actually understand the issue or (b) there are people that do it because they have to (for instance they feel pressure from the EU or the TIP Report committee). She said: "it depends on the specific people that are at the specific posts at the specific time … and this is a huge problem that we identify in Cyprus, it is frustrating to depend on people and not the system". Mrs Christodoulou gave another example on how culture can decelerate political and social change. In 2008, she stated, MIGS was appointed by the then Ministry of Interior to draft a national referral mechanism which would coordinate the government bodies and NGOs. They worked so hard to prepare it, that they had 18 drafts. Even though it was approved by the then Ministry of Interior, it never proceeded. She said that, after all these years, officers of the Ministry of Interior found it, reworked it, changed a lot of things and sent it to MIGS for suggestions. With the aforementioned examples, Mrs Christodoulou portrayed her frustration on how slowly changes take place which is not due to the understaffed services but to the attitudes and cultural based behaviors of people in positions of power.

As it is described above, most of the participants, when asked about the weaknesses of the system at one point or another, brought up the matter of culture within the services that reflects the culture in the society and the way that people think. Two things were observed at this point: first, politicians have their own way of working based on their own personal interests unless they are called to respond to a higher authority and second, that generally there are some stereotypes against foreigners. Both points could act as impediments towards the effort to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation.

*Biased cultural perceptions on prostitution:*

At this point, it is necessary to emphasise that all ten participants, who are fighting for the eradication of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, are women, hence their own perceptions on prostitution derive from a more feministic approach. In addition, how they believe prostitution is perceived by others also derives from their own experiences as women; how other people treat them, as women in power or female foreigners, on a daily basis. All the participants believe that Cypriots, in general, think that prostitution is a choice and women that are in prostitution want to be there. All the participants are firm in their belief that women's involvement in prostitution is not done by their own free choice. The situation and conditions they are in lead them towards that path (financially and socially vulnerable, migration status etc.). Mrs Demetriadou specifically stated:

> Our stance (Ombudsman's Office) towards prostitution is that we cannot handle this issue if we have the perception that it is a woman's free choice to enter prostitution. We should bear in mind at all times that, in this area, there is always the vulnerability for being taken advantage of. The image of a free, dynamic and autonomous woman who decides to work in this specific area of work is utopic especially in countries where there is no history of free choice. In addition, it concerns a professional area which is stigmatised and socially excluded hence free choice as a perception is problematic.

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Both Mrs Korpela and Mrs Chrysanthou, who are both from a foreign country, reported that they have also been harassed in the streets, as well as other places, by Cypriots with inappropriate proposals. According to Mrs Korpela's work and conversations with women from Africa and Asia, these women are harassed in even worse ways. As Mrs Christodoulou found, in a report they have drafted (but not finalised yet), demand for sex exists in Cyprus because men feel it is their right to buy women's bodies.

Mrs Christofidou, from Cyprus Stop Trafficking, in one of her articles, ("When the past persecutes us"- 119.6.2017), referred to a victim's case in court aiming to highlight the culture and cast of mind of Cypriot men in relation to prostitution. According to her, the buyer bought the victim twice but when he was asked in court whether he bought services for sex from her he said: "All proper Cypriot men buy women for sex, but this woman I have never seen before". The trafficker was acquitted.  Moreover, Mrs Christofidou, in one of her essays that was given to the researcher, stated that the Cypriot society does not allow trafficking of children, but it allows trafficking of women for sexual exploitation especially if these women are foreigners. She carries on saying that it is a phallic, xenophobic and racist society – "we actively fight drug trafficking which touches us and our children, but trafficking of women since they are foreigners leaves us indifferent".

## 7.7    Perceptions and attitudes towards Social Welfare Services

SWS should be playing a pivotal role in the lives of victims and their protection but, they also should be involved in drawing policies, evaluating services or designing new programmes (Hodge, 2014). The participants from the services (police, Ministry of Interior, Ombudsman's Office, Caritas Cyprus) which have the closest collaboration and involvement with the SWS, have all argued that the social welfare officers are not as effective as they should have been and their role in combating trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and in protecting the victims is minimal.

Mrs Demetriadou from the Ombudsman's office and Mrs Chrysanthou from Caritas Cyprus, referred to the lack of specialised social workers on trafficking and specifically on the 'on call' system they apply. Mrs Demetriadou said that when a victim is found by the police, the social worker who is on call needs to care for the victim but that social worker is not always the right person. Unfortunately, as Mrs Chrysanthou stated, with regards to SWS' programs and policies nothing has changed since the beginning of their efforts to combat trafficking. According to Sergeant Louca the SWS have internal policies that are not publicised or at least available to other government services.

Furthermore, Mrs Demetriadou stated that even though the collaboration of the SWS with the NGOs has improved, no collaboration protocols have been signed yet and basically the NGOs are doing the work of the SWS thus filling the gaps of their system. In addition, Sergeant Louca contends that the SWS do not satisfy the various needs that the victims have. She stated that there is no flexibility on behalf of the SWS to cover those needs. She said: "they follow the regulations and the legislation and if there is something that is not there, they are not allowed to do it. In the past, we as a unit sent letters to the SWS so that they could change a few things. We asked to see the internal regulations that the welfare officers follow so faithfully but they declined our request, so we end up doing the things they refuse to do."

Mrs Chrysanthou asserts that a social worker informed them that there is emergency money available for the victims but unfortunately from her experience she stated that the money is never enough and there are no regulations for making its dissemination clearer and fairer. She said:

> The money is not regular and the amounts are not clear for each girl and it is much less than the survival basket of Cyprus, so, the victims are still not receiving what they should be receiving, and are entitled "on paper" to everything from day one. In practice, this is not the case. They have to beg, we have to call and beg for money and they give a

hundred euros here and there, and nobody pays their rent. So, there are huge gaps that have always existed and still exist.

In addition, Mrs Chrysanthou asserts that social workers are not equipped with the right knowledge to help the victims and there are times that they even make the victims' lives more difficult. For example, Mrs Chrysanthou reported incidences where victims were misinformed about asylum procedures making them go back and forth to the offices with different papers or to apply for something they were not eligible for, therefore she believes that social workers are not good legal advisors at all. She also stated that social workers do not inform the victims about their rights, including compensation rights. Moreover, Mrs Chrysanthou contends that social workers, due to being overloaded with work or not having time, do not spend time to visit the victims in their homes and the victims have to find a way to visit them in their office. Most of the times the victims may not have money for the bus, may not know how to get there, and they might even have small babies with nowhere to leave them. Mrs Chrysanthou said:

> I can understand the fact that they are understaffed. What I cannot explain is when you inform them of a crisis and there is no reaction. I can understand when there is no emergency it slips, we do the same. I haven't talked to this person for half a year but since she hasn't called me it means she is doing ok, hopefully, but when you inform them of a crisis and there is no reaction, that is criminal to me.

In addition, Mrs Christodoulou, from MIGS, also admits and realises that social workers in the SWS are overloaded with cases, each having 300 or more cases to handle per month, which is humanly impossible to handle, so she stated:

> Each social worker is personally responsible for everything that is happening to them because if you are not happy, either act or just leave, show your reaction in this way. So, I think, and maybe I believe it's safe to say, if you think that things are not working, try to change it,

if you see that there is a difficulty in changing then leave, you are responsible, I mean I am responsible for my work that I am doing here but I understand they are working in the system but enough with the excuses you know?

Succinctly, the SWS, according to both participants (victims and key stakeholders) are inadequate. They do not provide the services and support that the victims need and they are rigid in changing their ways and policies as far as trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is concerned. It seems that the issue may not only be the fact that they are understaffed, but also that they are not reacting in order to change. Their actions, according to all the participants of this study (key informants and victims of trafficking), highlight the lack of willingness to change and a cultivation of an oppressed culture that could lead them to various problems and malfunctions.

## 7.8 Realities of sex trafficking in Cyprus

The realities of sex trafficking in Cyprus which are presented as findings, drawn from the stakeholders' interviews, are structured by stakeholders' experiences, as individuals in positions of power, but also as social beings living in the Cypriot society and culture. Therefore, it is important to portray their own understandings on the sex trafficking situation in Cyprus. To start with, sex trafficking is directly associated with prostitution and demand, according to the participants (key stakeholders). It seems that they all accept the fact that trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus exists and is a serious issue that all services should get more involved in tackling with more coordination and a common vision and strategy. Sergeant Louca stated that sex trafficking exists and despite the efforts of the state to tackle it, the numbers have not decreased and the criminal networks are expanding. She asserts that the venues where it takes place in Cyprus are uncontrollable and keep changing and new forms of trafficking are emerging (mothers that are recruited to give birth in Cyprus and give their babies for adoption, luxury

escort services by women that are ostensibly working alone and mendacity in various forms). Sergeant Louca predicates that there are no Cypriot women victims in Cyprus but that does not mean that there aren't any in other countries who they are not aware of. She states that they might even exist in Cyprus but because they have support from their families or other support systems they might not come to the police. According to the sergeant, it is also a matter of closed society and culture; it is not easy for a victim to admit that she is a victim.

Most of the participants' realities lie mostly in the fact that people's perceptions are affected by patriarchy and gender inequality. The participants, as women themselves, also have had personal experiences on behaviours deriving form gender inequality and patriarchy. Specifically, Mrs Chrysanthou and Mrs Korpela have stated that they personally faced and are still facing sexual harassment from Cypriots. Mrs Chrysanthou said:

> If Cypriot men have an affair they speak about it openly. In other countries in Europe, if you have an affair, you keep it quiet, you make sure that you treat your wife better so that she does not guess, you do not do this in front of her, so for me that was shocking, I do believe it is a cultural thing, gender thing, patriarchal society, but there is also this claim you know, we are Mediterranean, we need more sex than other nations, passionate, indeed they use this excuse. How do you drive it out of the culture? I do not know.

Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, stated that through her own experiences with conversations that she had over the time with acquaintances / educated people, there is a belief in Cyprus that women have to serve men's urges and for this reason demand for sex exists. In addition, Mrs Charalambidou stated:

> When we talk about sex trafficking, the issue is probably smaller than the general sexual exploitation that exists in women. Sexual exploitation exists to a large degree in our society. Now, whether the

victims are victims of trafficking, that certainly exists to a much larger scale than the number of the identified victims that amount to 20 a year let's say, I can not talk in numbers but I know and I am aware that sex trafficking exists and it is right next to us.

Furthermore, Mrs Christodoulou stated that patriarchy is not something on the surface, it is rooted. Her understanding about sex trafficking and generally about the system in Cyprus is as follows:

> What I find unacceptable is that in a country of less than a million population, we have almost 60,000 domestic workers who are being exploited, half of them legally and half of them undocumented. We have a number of women and men, mostly women, being trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation, and of course men for labour exploitation because of all the gender roles, and also children. This is what I cannot accept, for me it is unthinkable. Politics are difficult and I understand that, but I cannot accept the fact that we do not have a common vision in this country … For 42 years, our priority has been the Cyprus problem and of course I understand that, but all social issues have been put aside – drugs, alcoholism, trafficking, violence against women, domestic violence, child abuse – everything, and for this population as a proportion, the problems we are facing are huge.

In addition, Mrs Christodoulou states another view on sex trafficking concerning government of Cyprus' stance towards its approaches in tackling it. She stated that albeit Cyprus over the last ten years has gained knowledge, expertise and experience, it has not yet reached a common strategy, a common vision which, according to her, hinders Cyprus from effectively tackling the problem. In addition, she asserts that most of the actions towards combating the problem are concentrated on prosecution and protection and not as much on prevention and partnership which she believes are the most significant ones. Mrs Christodoulou predicates that the government of Cyprus is not proactive and it is letting women fall victim to this organised crime.

Moreover, Mrs Islam's understanding on sex trafficking was based more on a practical level which was interesting since she could see it mostly through the victims' lives. She stated that the victims now are more protected in comparison to the past because of the reformation of the legislation. Also, the anti-trafficking unit, over the years, has become more skilled and experienced but indeed the situation is far from perfect. According to Mrs Islam's experience with the victims, their reality is that most of them have children who were conceived from the forced prostitution and a lot of them feel trapped because they live in a system which is not structured to assist them with caring for their children if they want to find a job or leave the house for outdoor chores.

In addition, Mrs Islam contends that there is a lack of knowledge in Cypriots as far as diversity is concerned and a different cultural way of thinking. The victims sense the lack of knowledge from the professionals and they cannot open up to them. As Mrs Islam states "this could build a wall between the professional and the client." Mrs Islam asserts that even though there is a lack of structure and a political unwillingness to set up the structure, the attention should not be placed there, but on the fact that there is no sufficient knowledge and skills from the people involved in tackling, trafficking and protecting the victims. She gave an example of a researcher she encountered who was following the court hearings of some of the trafficking cases and she mentioned how the police officers from the anti-trafficking unit had such overwhelming sensitiveness towards the victims who, a lot of the times, felt the need to polish up their stories so that they could be more convincing in the court. Mrs Islam stated that, the police officers wanted to help but they were lacking the expertise and the knowledge however if they had had more expertise and knowledge, they would have known that if the story is polished, it will lack credibility and at the end that could work against victim in a court case.

Furthermore, Mrs Korpela, from Room of Hope, also described her own understanding from the victims' point of view. She contends that the victims have a lot of psychological issues and they struggle with how to handle what has happened to them and with social integration because they face racism by the Cypriots. She believes, in reality, the victims are traumatised and there is no proper social or political apparatus to help them live a normal life.

On the other hand, Mrs Fotiou's view on sex trafficking indicates an optimism regarding this type of trafficking. She contends that big steps have been taken as far as sex trafficking is concerned and that the victims who are identified by the police for labour exploitation are much more. So, she believes that the state should pay more attention to trafficking for labour exploitation.

Mrs Christofidou, from Cyprus Stop Trafficking, wrote, the reality is, by performing awareness campaigns and conducting seminars/conferences, people's perception and cast of mind about sex trafficking and prostitution is not expected to change any time soon. But at least through the general efforts of the various organisations, people are starting to learn about what human trafficking is. She stated:

> Today there are articles in the newspapers, TV programs, even soap operas on the issue, and the mass media are inviting us to talk about human trafficking. The circle is expanding and the thought that we might have contributed even a bit to this change, is very encouraging.

Through Mrs Christofidou's various articles and emails, it is noticed that she recognises and respects the anti-trafficking unit's work and she believes that it has improved a lot since 2007; however, she highlights the necessity of more effective interventions through a better cohesive effort and coordination of the various state departments and NGOs. This is the reason CTF left the multidisciplinary coordinating group. In her own words, she said: "We left the multidisciplinary group because of a lack of coordination – 'this is not my

responsibility it is the other's – and bureaucracy which unfortunately affects, inter alia, the operation of our various ministries."

Succinctly, the participants' realities on sex trafficking are surely affected by their own experiences which of course are important since they are the ones with the most experience and involvement in trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus. Cultural perceptions have surfaced that were associated with sex trafficking and demand and also the weak system which cannot assist the victims adequately. The most important factors that were probably mentioned are the lack of expertise, the lack of knowledge and skills and the gender bias, preconceptions and racism of not only the people who are involved with the victims but also of the ones who have the power to change policies. Therefore, the views on sex trafficking in Cyprus depicts a situation that demands both social and political change.

## 7.9  Services' future plans / suggestions for improving the efforts of tackling      sex trafficking

Most of the participants, when asked about their service's future plans concerning sex trafficking, replied in a more generic approach which indicates a lack of a strategically planned model of operation and also lack of service evaluation. The one who knew exactly what the plans were for the near future was Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior. Mrs Charalambidou predicates that the ministry has plans to amend the legislation regarding compensation, set a 24-hour line that will be appointed to an NGO along with the SWS, promote further awareness campaigns and training on the issue, follow the legislation amendment, support the victims regarding their housing issue, train the first line officers and judges, and create cooperation protocols with NGOs. She asserts that the cooperation protocols with NGOs will also include the proper funding for them to be able to implement the agreed actions.

Mrs Efthimiadou, from SWS asserts that there are plans for SWS to change. She said that, so far, SWS have been connected only to financial support of people and now that the financial aid has been removed from their duties, the services can target specific populations and therefore social work practice will finally be implemented. She did not mention any plans, though, for any changes concerning the way social workers and the SWS handle trafficking victims. She also stated that generally the politicians in Cyprus are very reluctant and changes happen only if there are certain people with the will to fight, knock on doors and depend on the politicians' willingness to do something to change it. For this reason, Mrs Efthimiadou contends that there is a need for more research in Cyprus but unfortunately the state will not fund more research because it's not considered a top priority.

Furthermore, Sergeant Louca stated that their office is in need of more staff members, because they need to be able to specialise on each department they have in the unit. If they succeed in having more staff, then more cases will be proceeded to court and bigger convictions and penalties will be accomplished. This is what they are aiming for in the future.

Moreover, Mrs Christodoulou, from MIGS, states that with whatever they grapple with involves education of others on trafficking or violence against women issues. For example, they are working on a project now which is called "Time to Act" which is about equal representation of women and men in the parliament. The strategy of the project pertains to the approach of civil society organisations that are working on women's rights and providing them with the tools to implement 'gender mainstreaming women organisations' and push for more women in the parliament. She said:

> Are all women parliamentarians for women's rights? Of course not, but history has showed us that women in the parliament are those who make social change in the parliament. For example, maternity rights and rights of sexual harassment in the workplace, were put on the

agenda by women parliamentarians. Trafficking was also put on the agenda by women.

Mrs Christodoulou contends that MIGS is working on various projects that can cause a chain of reactions – one project affects the other – consequently more women in the parliament can cause more effects. She also believes that albeit there is ample work still needed to tackle the problem, there is expertise available but it is not used effectively. In addition, Mrs Christodoulou asserts that the government should start using the moto 'follow the money' which is promoted by the European Commission. It means that money is gained by everyone who is involved in trafficking; therefore, if the money is followed it will lead to the whole circuit. It will also provide a better comprehension of how the traffickers work. Both Mrs Christodoulou and Mrs Efthimiadou believe that more research is needed for many aspects of the trafficking phenomenon.

On a more practical level, Mrs Chrysanthou, from Caritas Cyprus, suggested for the implementation of case management and multidisciplinary group meetings for each case. She believes that, this way, the victim will be profited the most but also the professionals' work will be facilitated.

Lastly, in an essay that was provided to the researcher by Mrs Christofidou, she stated that there is a need of change in social perceptions and mentalities of people. She wrote: "there is no doubt that the roots of sexual exploitation of women, which is a social phenomenon, could be traced back to the relationships between men and women, the social norms of women and men's behavior, as well as other misconceptions related to gender roles which have been maintained and perpetuated until this day within the families, classrooms and society in general." This has had consequences on all systems of society and one system that is especially affected, according to Mrs Christofidou, is the judicial system which results in long delays of court cases and prolonged suffering for the victims. Moreover, in an email sent by Mrs Christofidou to the organisations' members, she referred to the

impediments that the police have had in its investigations of trafficking cases. She said that they do not have the authority to track the phones of suspects whereas the Constitution in article 17, paragraph 2 states that authorisation can be granted if there is suspicion of involvement in crime and trafficking which is specifically mentioned as one of the crimes. She insists that this needs to change so the police can combat trafficking more effectively.

In addition, Mrs Christofidou contends that a memorandum of collaboration between her organisation and the SWS would be very helpful, so that the responsibilities of the welfare services towards the victims could be clearer. It would also clarify what can be provided as complementary assistance by NGOs like CST and Caritas Cyprus since the social workers are overloaded with work.

In conclusion, the services' future plans are limited to rough depictions of what the participants think should be changed without having an official strategy which is approved by services. Consequently, this indicates the lack of organisation, political will, coordination and service evaluation. On the one hand, they do consider sex trafficking as a serious problem in Cyprus but on the other hand, there is a sloppiness on how they plan to handle it.

## 7.10  Conclusion

The findings from the interviews with the eleven key informants on trafficking of women for commercial sex have depicted the policies and stances that each service has on the issue, their perceptions on what the weaknesses of the system are, generally their realities on sex trafficking and their plans on further efforts to tackle it as well as suggestions for strengthening the weaknesses. The research questions mentioned in the introduction have been analysed in this chapter and it is found that services that took part in this study, and are the main services in Cyprus working towards tackling human trafficking, are generally trying to follow the legislation but there are many impediments in its implementation. Ten out of eleven participants are women

and their understanding of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is heightened by their gender. They fully comprehend the effect it has on the women victims but on the other hand, it is agreed by all, the system is weak and there are many factors that affect it. It was interesting to find that during the interviews, all participants, after they had pointed out their own perceptions on the system's weaknesses, could not dispute the researcher's reference on other potential weaknesses which derived from other participants and literature. Hence, the weaknesses succinctly refer to: lack of coordination and collaboration, lack of staff and service evaluation, lack of financial, legal, social, and psychological support to the victims, lack of first line officers, judges and lawyers' training; the operation of the state shelter is weak and has many flaws; there is corruption of officers and procedure opacity; and there is a culture within the services and cultural perceptions on prostitution that hinder the effective implementation of policies and legislation.

Their main suggestions for improving the system mostly pertain actions for prevention, since so far, the focus has been on protection and prosecution. It is found that more training is needed for all officers, judges, lawyers, more resources should be available and the staff numbers should increase significantly so the approach could be more effective and fair. A common strategy and vision is needed so the coordination and collaboration could be better and the state and NGOs should sign memorandums of collaboration in order to be able to complement each other in a more effective and official way. The government should also hire more officers in all ministries and specialisations should start taking place in each department.

It is indicated that there are a lot of difficulties with the system on combating trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and all the services are aware of them, however the NGOs are found to be more involved than the state. The cultural perceptions and norms of Cypriot people, and men in particular as far as demand is concerned, seems to be in the minds of all the participants and that is something they believe affects the slow rhythm in which changes take place.

# CHAPTER 8:        DISCUSSION

## 8.1    Introduction

The findings of this study were derived from in depth interviews with seven women who were identified as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation and ten key stakeholders from both government services and NGOs. By using in-depth interviews with both categories of participants, the researcher aimed to compare their knowledge, opinion and perception on the social policies and social work practice in Cyprus regarding trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. The study's aim was to examine the limitations and strengths of the government of Cyprus' system on a policy and social work practice level and the reasons the government did not address the weaknesses of the 'support system' for the victims. In addition, it aimed to inform about the improvements that could be made in policy and practice in Cyprus based on the literature and the findings of this study. This chapter will discuss the findings by first addressing the following research questions:

- Has trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus been adequately addressed in social policy and social work practice?

    - What are the limitations and strengths of social policies and social work practices in Cyprus?
    - Why are the weaknesses not addressed by the government of Cyprus?
    - Are the needs of victims of trafficking being met in Cyprus?

- How is trafficking of women for sexual exploitation perceived by the government, NGOs and victims?

- Does the government of Cyprus identify and accept the policy and social work practice limitations and strengths?
- How do the various government services and NGOs in Cyprus perceive their role and responsibilities in tackling trafficking and protecting the victims?
- Do the victims of trafficking understand their situation and do they feel they are supported effectively by the government of Cyprus?

- How can the government of Cyprus improve its efforts in tackling trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and protecting the victims?

  - Is the government of Cyprus capable of taking action and addressing the policy and social work practice limitations?
  - Are there any impediments that could hinder the government's efforts?
  - Are there any good practices in other countries that could be implemented in Cyprus to tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and support the victims?

## 8.2 The government of Cyprus and NGOs' positions and actions on social policies

Initially, it is important to discuss the role of each service and whether it is compatible with what it is stated in the legislation and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). It is found that all the service representatives interviewed were well aware of the role their service was playing in tackling trafficking and protecting the victims and also well aware of the actions their services implemented. This finding, though, only indicates that they have at least studied the legislation and policies around trafficking. However, in comparison with what the participants (victims) of this study have stated, there are a lot of issues on a practical level with specific services such as the Social Welfare Services (SWS) and the Civil Registry and Migration Department. According

to the participants (victims), the SWS have not fully provided them with the various types of support that the legislation and NRM state. The social workers only escorted the victims to the health services and labour office but they did not provide them with psychological support nor did they refer them to other state services or NGOs. The participants (victims) also had issues with the Civil Registry and Migration Department, stating that they were not treated with respect and that it took them long to get the residence permit. However, ever since the interviews with the victims, procedures within the Civil Registry and Migration Department have changed so anything that was said, regarding lack of organisation and other issues, does not apply.

Furthermore, it was very disappointing to find out that, albeit the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group's (MCG) effort to plan and design the NAPs every three years, there is no political willingness to use the existing funds that are available specifically for the NAPs and implement their actions effectively. The fact that the participants' (key stakeholders) statements justify the weak implementation by stating that the services are understaffed and there is lack of communication, only indicates the weak government administration.

As far as the legislation is concerned, it is noted by everyone in this study that there is a need for another amendment. The legislation was reformed in 2014 taking into consideration for the first time, the victims' protection by permitting them to reside in Cyprus without the fear of deportation, and the criminalisation of the purchase of sex. Those were the two main changes in the legislation. However, article 17 (Law 60(I)/2014), which concerns the criminalisation of demand, is stated in such a way that buyers of sex could easily get away with it. It states that unless buyers of sex services can prove they were not aware ("could reasonably assume") the services they used were provided by a victim of trafficking, they will be prosecuted. It was noted by most of the participants that suggestions have been sent to the MCG for another reformation of the legislation including an amendment of article 17 (criminalisation of the purchase of sex), but also of article 35 concerning the

victims' rights for compensation. It will be very interesting for future research to examine what will happen after the legislation is reformed.

Moreover, compensation for the victims is another part of the legislation that is said to change, as mentioned above, which concerns the measures for the victims' protection interventions. Article 35, of Law 60(I)/2014, is not strong enough and it does not state clearly the differentiation between the compensation from the trafficker and the compensation from the state. The findings on compensation are bestowed by the OSCE/ODIHR (2008, 20), where it refers to the "Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power and European Union Law such as the EU Council Directive on Compensation of Crime Victims", that support the victims by getting compensation by their traffickers and the state, even though the compensation by the state is limited to "material damages in cases where the offence was an intentional crime of violence resulting in physical or mental injury". It is also stated that in practice, it is very rare for a trafficked person to receive a compensation payment. There has only been one active lawsuit so far in Cyprus which is still under trial. The OSCE/ODIHR (2008) contends that trafficked victims may not seek compensation because most of them are foreigners in the country and do not know their rights or they are too scared of their traffickers and do not want to go against them. They also do not know how to access justice or other relative mechanisms (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008). However, Sergeant Louca, from the Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Police of Cyprus, contended that the reason why there are no other lawsuits from victims for compensation is because they are still at the beginning of the process for applying for it. Even if victims have not still applied for it, it is not clear whether the state compensation could be available or possible unless the legislation is changed.

In addition, no participants (victims) of this study received any compensation because their cases took place before the amendment of the law in 2014 but they also did not know about it when they were interviewed in 2015. But, even if they were identified as victims of trafficking before the amendment of the

law and the compensation right had not been in effect, they should still have had the right to apply for it and they should have been informed about it by the SWS.

Moreover, this study shows that most actions that tackle human trafficking in Cyprus are mainly focused on only the two Ps paradigm – Protection and Prosecution. The government of Cyprus has used a human rights' and victims' protection approach so far as it was promoted by the GRETA and TIP Reports. It has increased the safety and protection clauses in the legislation and policies for the victims and it has also increased its collaborations with the NGOs for the care and protection of victims. As it was stated by some participants, both victims and key stakeholders, the NGOs complemented the government services since they were lacking personnel, hence time, effort and resources. In addition, there is only one government shelter for the women identified as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation and as it was stated from participants (both categories) that the shelter lacks programmes to support the victims and, more precisely, it lacks psychological support within the shelter.

The needs of the victims vary depending on each case. The government having had ten or more years' experience of dealing with victims of trafficking should have been recording and categorising the victims' needs hence be more prepared to provide them with the proper support. If the government cannot provide full services for the support of the victims but has the funding to implement them, firstly, it should hire more employees and secondly, sign cooperation / memorandum protocols with the NGOs so that they could fund them in order to provide those services. The NGOs, Cyprus Stop Trafficking and Caritas, have been asking for housing funds from the SWS for a few years but have not received anything. They have been paying for victims' housing needs themselves through their own charity efforts. According to Mrs Charalambidou, of the Ministry of Interior, the funding to implement the actions of the NAP is available but most of it has not been used. So, the question raised here concerns the reasons why the ministry does not fund the

NGOs to care for and support the victims in ways that the state does not. The answer, according to the overall stance of the participants (key stakeholder) towards the system's weaknesses, could be that procedures and bureaucracy cause a delay in the policy change or the implementation of an intervention. At this point, the lack of service and procedure evaluation is surfaced. There are no policies in Cyprus for evaluations of government services.

As far as the prosecution of the traffickers is concerned, the Anti-Trafficking Police Unit is specialised and according to the statements of participant (both categories), they perform their job to the degree the system and legislation allows them to.  Firstly, according to Sergeant Louca, they cannot prosecute a sex buyer because it is very difficult to prove that they 'reasonably assumed' the sex worker was not a victim of trafficking. So, there is a flaw in the legislation which makes their job harder. Secondly, even though all the members of the unit were trained both locally and abroad, they do not have the necessary tools and authorisations to be able to eradicate the crime networks. An example would be the authorisation to track phone calls of suspects or venues under suspicion of 'employing' victims of trafficking. Most of the victims who participated in this study stated that the police officers from the Anti-Trafficking Unit were the only people that helped them and had gone above and beyond to provide them with moral support and to connect them with NGOs for other types of support.  However, two victims complained about not receiving the right approach from the police officers. The two women that complained were the two African women from Cameroon and Nigeria, who were severely traumatised by their traffickers. According to the researcher's assessment, during the interviews with them, they were also traumatised by the police procedures. This indicates the lack of training of police officers in more specialised methods of interviewing victims with these types of trauma. It also indicates the need for supporting police's work by appointing a social worker and a psychologist directly to the Anti-Trafficking Unit or they could be employed by it. Their role could be to prepare the victims for the police interrogations and to be the liaison between the police and the other services. In this way, the police officers could gain more

valuable information that could be used against the traffickers therefore making the victims' court cases stronger.

The actions concerning the government's efforts for prevention are limited to: awareness campaigns which are part of the NAPs, the configuration of the NAP every three years by the MCG, the reformation of the explicit legislation on human trafficking which is done whenever the MCG gathers suggestions for change, and the National Referral Mechanism which was created to help with the explication of each service's role and responsibility in tackling human trafficking in Cyprus. On a non-government level, conferences and seminars are organised, research is conducted, and training / workshops take place in the army camps, all over Cyprus, to young soldiers to raise awareness about sex trafficking. It should be noted that the non-government efforts are not funded by the government. If all these efforts were implemented in a consistent and systematic way, and the state collaborated better and more frequently with the NGOs by funding them as well, then the prevention efforts could be considered efficient to some degree. However, it was highlighted by most of the participants (both categories) that all the processes and efforts to implement an action or make a change to a policy or practice is time consuming. As Mrs Christodoulou, from MIGS stated, it took ten years for the legislative clause concerning the criminalisation of demand for sex, to be added in the legislation.

Most of the participants stated that the delays and procrastination noticed in the government system, reflect on some of the characteristics of the Cyprus culture. It seems that it is a system which focuses on a few issues that are considered as priority by the government (e.g. the "Cyprus problem" and the financial crisis) and do not pay the necessary attention to the rest of the social problems especially when some of them concern people from other countries. Racism is a factor that most of the participants (both categories) have stated and many have experienced it in Cyprus. It would be interesting to see the reactions of the political apparatus if the victims of trafficking were Cypriots.

On a last note, the NGOs' positions and actions on social policies have played a pivotal role in policy formation and policy change. MIGS and KISA are two NGOs that are involved mostly in research regarding women's rights, gender equality issues, refugee and immigrant rights and so on. They have put pressure on the politicians by conducting research and publishing reports, press releases and statistics regarding the aforesaid issues, that served as proof for the need of policy change. On the other hand, other NGOs like Cyprus Stop Trafficking, Caritas Cyprus and Room of Hope, with their work on a practical level, have proved that there are many gaps in the implementation of policies.

Succinctly, the positions and actions of the government of Cyprus on social policies to tackle the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation are recognisable (at least meeting the minimum standards of the 4Ps paradigms) but not efficient. Whereas the work of the NGOs has been recognised by all participants (both categories) which is very significant and it can affect the formation of social policies. The social policies in Cyprus will be further evaluated and discussed in point 8.5 where they will be compared to policies of other countries.

## 8.3    The government of Cyprus and NGOs' position and actions concerning   social work practice

The findings of this study have indicated that social work practice regarding human trafficking is scarce in Cyprus. Unfortunately, social work practice in Cyprus is limited to the role and responsibilities of the social workers employed by the Social Welfare Services (SWS). It is very interesting to observe that all participants (both categories), even Mrs Efthimiadou from the SWS, have stated that the social workers' work with the victims is not sufficient nor effective. According to the legislation and the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the responsibilities of the social workers are limited to informing the victims about their rights and escorting them to the necessary services for their social reintegration (state health services, department of

labour, Civil Registry and Migration Department, the Guaranteed Minimum Income Service). Most of the participants (victims) complained that they only saw the social worker in the shelter once or twice and the only help they received concerned their connection and escort to the health services and the department of labour. The ones that visited social workers in their offices after having left the shelter, visited them only for financial support. They commented that the behaviour of a couple of the social workers they met was very demeaning and made them feel very bad and exposed as victims.

All the participants (key stakeholders) have stated that social workers should be providing more than what is stated in the NRM. The participants from the NGOs who are not social workers (besides the social worker from the Future World Centre) were clearer than the SWS on what social workers should be providing to the victims. Participants from Cyprus Stop Trafficking, Caritas Cyprus and Roof of Hope felt that they were taking on responsibilities that were beyond their knowledge and training, however they learned to do what needed to be done because they had no other option since no one else would do it.

The issue with the social workers in the SWS according to the participants (key stakeholders), is that they are constantly changing positions and departments and they are not specialised. This means that the system of the SWS offers no room for specialisations. Mrs Efthimiadou admitted that there is an issue with not having enough social workers so the possibility of having specialisations would not be feasible. Most of the social workers are overloaded with cases, and victims of trafficking are just added to the rest of the cases they have to handle. From a workshop that the researcher, with one of her colleagues, conducted in 2016 to 80 social workers of the SWS, it was found that most of them experienced burnout symptoms. A very interesting remark was made by Mrs Christodoulou, from MIGS, about the social workers in the SWS. She argued that if someone is not satisfied with their work and more precisely they are pressured and stressed because they are overloaded with work, then why do not they act? Why do not they demand

for change? Why do they consent to this type of pressure? This type of questioning could point to the creation of a unique culture within the SWS and it would be interesting to be researched in order to answer the aforesaid questions.

The work, the social workers should be performing, is illustrated in point 8.6 where examples of international social work guidelines and practices will be discussed in comparison to the non-existing ones in Cyprus.

## 8.4    Policies in other countries and in Cyprus

Policies, within an international framework, are drafted based on the '4 Ps' paradigm – Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnerships. This paradigm is used by all countries to combat all forms of slavery and is outlined in both the United Nations' Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Cyprus also utilises the 4 Ps paradigm. To make it clearer, the main social policies and actions towards the 4 Ps, that the Cyprus government has implemented so far, are outlined in Table 7. In the following paragraphs, the efforts of the government of Cyprus, in comparison with other countries' policies, will be discussed.

*Policies in tackling trafficking of women for sexual exploitation:*
The government of Cyprus has ratified many policies from the European acquis and has adjusted them to the Cypriot social and political datum level. Inter alia, the government of Cyprus shaped the explicit legislation on human trafficking and its reformations according to the Palermo Protocol and the EU Directive 2011/36/EE. In addition, it signed international and European conventions and drew other national directives and legislations related to THB such as the Employers Sanctions Directive which criminalises the employers who employ persons who have been trafficked, the Witness Protections Law, the Prevention of and Tackling of Sexual Abuse Law, the Refugee Law and so on. Theoretically, the government of Cyprus has all the legislations and social policies concerning THB and trafficking of women for sexual

exploitation but it lack in implementation. So, social policies should be created in an effort to tackle the problem more holistically. As it is observed in Table 7, but also the actions included in the NAPs, the main efforts of the government concentrate mainly on prosecution of traffickers and protection of victims.

As far as prevention measures are concerned, Cyprus is lacking in implementation of policies and actions, and in broadening its focus on 'push' and 'pull' factors of THB. By looking at who the vulnerable populations are, in terms of becoming victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, the circumstances that make those populations vulnerable could be assessed and then actions could be taken to improve them.

For instance, researchers, as it is indicated in the literature review chapters, have been debating about the conflation of prostitution and sex trafficking and on whether legalising prostitution would decrease sex trafficking or not. Nonetheless, prostitutes are considered a vulnerable population either way. In Cyprus, prostitution is legal but not soliciting and making profit out of it. However, there is no exclusive legislation concerning prostitution in Cyprus, it is included in the Cyprus Criminal Code which was passed in 1959 (see Chapter 3, point 3.3.1). Now, concerning the debate of whether prostitution should be legal or not, it is indicated in the literature review (Chapter 4) that it does not matter. What matters are the actions and policies that will be implemented and how they will be implemented, no matter what the decision is for each country to either legalise prostitution or not. For instance, the Netherlands and Germany both legalised sex work. In the Netherlands, sex trafficking increased and in Germany it decreased because of stricter and more rigorous police work. In Sweden, sex work is legal but buying sex is not. Which means that sex workers are not prosecuted for selling sex services but people that buy sex services from them are. However, Sweden has taken this legal frame a step further by aiming to reduce the demand for sex services through educational programmes for sex buyers that got arrested and for the rest of its citizens too (Marinova & James, 2012).

The government of Cyprus was influenced by the Swedish model. With the new amendment of the law in 2014, demand is criminalised. But, as it was previously mentioned, sex buyers are prosecuted only if they 'reasonably assumed' that the sex services they received were from a victim of trafficking and not a sex worker. This has proven to be problematic, since there have not been any convictions of sex buyers since the law amendment. Therefore, by not criminalising any form of sex purchase, whether provided by a victim of trafficking or by a sex worker, the new amendment of the law is useless.

*Policies in assisting and protecting the victims:*

According to Article 8 of the EU Directive of 2011, victims of trafficking should not be punished or prosecuted for crimes they committed under trafficking situations. It basically shifted to a more human rights and victim-centred approach and added more elements for the protection of the victims such as assistance to accommodation, counselling, psychological assistance, medical treatment, information, translation and interpretation services, material assistance, financial compensation and protection of victims during criminal investigations and proceedings (Van der Leun & Van Schijndel, 2016, 30; European Parliament and Council of EU, 2011). The government of Cyprus has included all the aforesaid in its legislation and social policies for the protection of the victims.

Moreover, the government of Cyprus has adopted the Trafficking Protocol, the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees and the principle of non-refoulement which protects the victims of trafficking from being forced to return to their countries of origin if their life or liberty is at risk (IOM, 2007). In addition, the government of Cyprus has also adopted the EU Directive of 2011 regarding the protection of victims from secondary victimisation during the criminal investigations and proceedings. The victims are protected from their traffickers by the police and if necessary they are protected under the Witness Protection Law. The victims should also be protected by the police officers, lawyers and the courts by careful and skillful

approaches during their interviews and testimonies. According to the findings of this study and as it was previously mentioned, the police officers in Cyprus do not have specialised techniques and skills to interview victims with trafficking traumas in order to protect them effectively from re-victimisation.

Furthermore, government of Cyprus has included in the legislation the financial compensation of victims from their traffickers and the state. The government has coincided with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (adopted in 2005 and entered force in 2008) where victims of trafficking can "claim compensation for both moral and material damages from the trafficker" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2008, 19). Even though the victims can claim compensation from the state as well, in Cyprus the state compensation is not clear and no victim has received it. It was contended by the participants (key stakeholders) of this study that at least the persons identified as having been trafficked in Cyprus have the right to apply for the State Guaranteed Minimum Income which is a monthly pay that barely covers their basic needs plus rent.

**Table 8.1:    The government of Cyprus' response**

| 4 'Ps' | Social policies and actions |
|---|---|
| **Prevention** | • Cyprus is the 10th country to ratify the European Commission's Convention for the Action against human trafficking<br><br>• Law 87(I)/2007: 'Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and Protection of Victims Law'<br><br>• Law 13(I)/2012: 'Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and Protection of Victims Law' (amended)<br><br>• Law 60(I)/2014: 'The Prevention of and the Tackling of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the Protection of Victims Law'. The new law was more oriented towards the protection of the victims.<br><br>• According to Law 87(I)/2007 In 2007, the coordination of all actions towards the combating of HT was appointed to the Minister of Interior.<br><br>• The Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG) was formed in 2007. It consisted of all the government bodies involved in tackling HT plus four NGOs.<br><br>• The first National Action Plan (NAP) was drafted in 2001. Its actions were never implemented. In 2009, the MCG drafted and passed a new NAP for 2010 – 2012. Two more NAPs were passed: NAP 2013 – 2015 and NAP 2016 – 2018. Most of the actions of NAPs 2010 – 2015 were not implemented either.<br><br>• In 2009, the former Minister of Interior abolished the 'artist visa' which was replaced by the 'work visa' which allowed people to stay in Cyprus only for three months at a time. |
| **Prosecution** | • The Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Police came into force in 2004. In 2015, its specialised members increased to twelve officers. It controls and coordinates all the human trafficking cases.<br><br>• The new legislation of 2014 added a new clause (article 17) which criminalises demand. Article 17 refers to the prosecution of the buyer of sex services unless they could prove ('could reasonably assume') that the woman, they received the services from, was not victim of trafficking.<br><br>• According to Law 60(I)/2014 the traffickers if found guilty are convicted for up to ten years in prison. Sex buyers are convicted to no more than three years in prison or fined with no more than fifteen thousand euros or they are convicted with both penalties. |

| 4 'Ps' | Social policies and actions |
|---|---|
| **Protection** | • The first government shelter for women identified as having been trafficked was opened in 2007 and is under the supervision of the Social Welfare Services.<br>• The victims with the new law of 2014 are not deported and are provided with a direct resident's permit within a day after their identification as victims of trafficking. The resident's permit gives them access to all the rights and benefits the Cypriot citizens have. The new permit expires in a year and they have the right to renew it.<br>• The new law of 2014 also provides them with the right for civil compensation.<br>• The draft of a National Referral Mechanism was finally completed and disseminated to all the services in 2016. It aims to make the responsibilities and role of each service clearer so that the victims can be referred to them efficiently.<br>• The victims have free access to health services, labour force and have the right to apply for the Guaranteed Minimum Income (state financial aid). |
| **Partnership** | • The government of Cyprus collaborated with GRETA in 2010 and 2015 and TIP Reports from 2004 until today (2017).<br>• The Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Police collaborates with Interpol and Europol.<br>• The Police signed memorandum protocols with twelve NGOs. |

The policies concerning the protection of the victims have certainly improved with the new legislation, however the government has not paid much attention to what happens to them after their court cases are finished. Albeit the law states that the support should continue for some time after the criminal proceedings are done, it is found, through this study, that they receive no support from the government besides the Guaranteed Minimal Income.

## 8.5    International and Cypriot social work practice

The social work practice in Cyprus has a discernible difference with how proper social work practice should be conducted with regards to victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, as it is previously stated, social work in Cyprus is not specialised in human trafficking. The social workers who handle trafficking cases belong to the SWS' system which is inefficient since it is understaffed; the existing staff is overworked and there is no specialised unit. Besides the fact that the social workers change posts within the services, they also handle the trafficking cases along with various other types of cases. It seems that the system and policies of the SWS do not work in favour of the victims of trafficking nor do the social workers themselves. It was indicated by the findings of this study that the social workers of the SWS undergo training to learn the legislation and policies around THB but they are not trained with specialised techniques and skills for dealing with victims of trafficking.

Nonetheless, Cyprus' almost absent social work practice examples concerning THB, do not differ much from what is happening internationally. Albeit researchers in the recent years have drawn attention to social work's involvement in human trafficking, the literature concerning the profession's role is mostly descriptive (Okech, et al., 2011). Therefore, there can be no discussion on how the Cypriot social work practice is compared with other countries' practices.

## 8.6 Social policies and social work practice in Cyprus – changes and improvements

The findings of this study have shown that policies and practices are in need of changes and improvements. Initially, the findings indicate a need for collaboration between the services, government and non-government, that are involved in tackling human trafficking. The creation and usage of cooperation/memorandum protocols, between the government services and the NGOs, were highlighted by the participants. In fact, a few months after the completion of the interviews, with the participants (key stakeholder), the police took the initiative and announced publicly on the 29 of March 2017, the signature of memorandum protocols between them and twelve NGOs, including all the NGOs in this study, aiming to expand the network of communication between the police and civil society regarding human rights' protection and enhancement of social cohesion. Hopefully, the example of the police will ensue other collaborations amongst other state services and NGOs and especially between the Social Welfare Services and NGOs since it is directly associated with the protection of the victims. As the OSCE/ODIHR (2008) stated, the NGOs play a very important role in assisting the victims but usually they are too small to be able to help to the degree that is needed and the funding is limited. Nonetheless, a collaboration with a government service would benefit mostly the victims but also the NGOs in order to be able to operate more effectively.

In addition, multidisciplinary groups should be formed for case management, as Mrs Crysanthou, from Caritas Cyprus, suggested, through a collaboration of government services and NGOs that would include all the pertinent professionals. As Ross-Sheriff & Orme (2015) contend, to fully assist the victims to recover from their trauma, multidisciplinary efforts should be made.

Furthermore, Mrs Charalambidou, from the Ministry of Interior, stated that the Ministry plans to operate a 24-hour line in collaboration with an NGO and SWS, further amend the legislation; specifically regarding the victims' compensation and demand prosecution, conduct further training with first line officers and judges, and help the

victims with the housing issues they are confronted with.  It is noted, by IOM (2007), that service providers should assist the victims as far as housing and accommodation is concerned by providing a shelter or a safe house until they are financially able to live on their own, or a housing allowance as another temporary solution.

Mrs Christofidou, from the Cyprus Stop Trafficking organisation, suggested the creation of a policy which will authorise the police to track the phones of suspects facilitating them in this way to effectively build the cases against the traffickers and therefore making their prosecution and conviction more possible.

As far as the social policies are concerned, the researchers' recommendations, in addition to the participants' recommendations, suggests further legislation reformation and better policies regarding the procedures within state departments thus avoiding the opacity that was mentioned by the participants. In addition, she suggests the creation of a professional network which is going to be based on an electronic platform. All the services, which are involved in tackling human trafficking will have access to the platform by a single appointed person each. This platform will allow them to view each victim's situation since each service will inform the platform of all the actions performed for each victim. In this sense, it will also be apparent as to what the victim is lacking and what else the victim may need. This platform could work as a base for coordination of policies, practices and actions towards tackling human trafficking and assisting / protecting the victims.

Moving on, the identification of victims is a crucial point and all frontline officers involved in tackling THB, including social workers, police officers, migration officers, lawyers and judges, should be provided with specialised training on how to at least identify characteristics of victims. The TIP report (2017) suggests that specialised training should be undertaken by judges and prosecutors on the legislation's application, and also law enforcement should go through specialised training that includes best practices for interviewing victims of trafficking. In addition, IOM (2015) suggested three specific parameters of response to combating trafficking concerning the before, during and after

the trafficking situation. Therefore, prevention should be encouraged through the efforts of the state but also through the appropriate training of officials and NGOs for: identifying the at-risk populations and victims of trafficking, the creation of a National Referral Mechanism in times of crisis, and a well-structured and coordinated collaboration amidst the government and non-government actors (IOM, 2015).

Moreover, according to the TIP Report (2016), it is very critical for governments and international organisations to be in a better position to identify and help victims of trafficking among migrant populations. "This can be accomplished by making efforts to ensure adequate staffing in centres and training immigration officials, including those charged with interviewing asylum applicants, to screen for indicators of trafficking. Another important opportunity of prevention is at ports of entry, where authorities can facilitate the distribution of information to migrants, including refugees on the risks of human trafficking and available resources from governments, international organisations, and NGOs. Inspections at worksites employing foreign labourers, training for police on indicators of sex and labour trafficking, and providing refugees and asylum-seekers with opportunities to work are all worthy prevention efforts" (TIP Report, 2016, p. 22).

Briefly, in terms of suggestions to directly tackle trafficking, IOM (2015) explains that great importance should be placed on the protection of the victims. For example, advocating for them through a cluster system, undertaking rapid assessments by trained staff, drafting local and national standard operating procedures, being clear about roles and responsibilities for actors through emergency referral mechanisms, identifying safe places for the people who have been trafficked, providing reintegration assistance to victims, appointing a legal guardian promptly to unaccompanied and separated children of victims of trafficking, family tracing and reunification, and being able to benefit by either government or non-government legal support and by providing them with information about their rights.

As far as social work practice is concerned, it is limited to the work of welfare officers

from the SWS. Unfortunately, they are not specialised and in addition they are understaffed consequently they have more cases than they can handle. The SWS should recognise the need for specialisation regarding human trafficking in general. The role of social workers should include a lot more than what is written in the National Referral Mechanism. First, the SWS need to hire more social workers and they need to create a specific department which will handle only cases of people who have been trafficked. Secondly, the department should consist of specialised units for each form of trafficking. Thirdly, the specific social workers should undertake training focused on techniques and communication and other skills specialised on victims of trafficking. Fourthly, SWS should prepare a statute which will clearly state the duties and responsibilities of the SWS, in general, regarding human trafficking and specifically of the social workers in the new human trafficking unit.

The social workers' role in regard to the victims should be extended to other responsibilities too. The researcher agrees with the IOM's (2007) general guidelines for assisting the victims, that social workers could get involved with monitoring the victims' reintegration into society at least for three months, whether they have gone back home or stayed in Cyprus, which is something that does not happen at all. They should also help the victims with job placements and wage subsidies which is also not happening.

However, before the social workers apply all the aforementioned tactics and actions (deriving from the study at hand) to assist people that have been trafficked, they need to be familiar with what human trafficking is and study all that it entails. This is where literature comes to fill in the gaps, concerning what social workers could do, in theory, to assist and protect the victims of trafficking more effectively. Even though the following information has not been empirically applied and tested, it could be useful to social workers in practice, and in a next stage empirical studies could emanate from it. Social workers need to understand where the victims come from, who they are, and the identified risk factors, the factors that push women and children in the sex trafficking situation, such as, inter alia, "negative family dynamics, lower intellectual functioning, poor school success, inadequate social skills, and histories of physical, sexual, and

emotional abuse, and neglect" (Hummond & McGlone, 2014, 158). By being familiar with the push factors, social workers will be able to plan their interventions more effectively, as explained below. Meanwhile, Hummond and McGlone (2014) contend that the ways victims enter sex trafficking, progress while they are in it, and exit the situation is equally as important knowledge for social workers as the risk factors.

Hummond and McGlone (2014) predicated that the way the victims enter the trafficking situation and the phase of progression they reach, plays an important role on how the victims exit the situation and how the social workers will plan their intervention. For instance, if victims are at early stages of sex trafficking where the effects are not as severe as in later stages, the enticement for exiting should be a promise for a better life since most of them were vulnerable in the first place because they were seeking a better life for themselves and their families. However, for victims who are in later stages of sex trafficking, and deep into drugs, alcohol and abuse, the need for them to exit would likely concern their health and welfare (Hummond & McGlone, 2014). Therefore, social workers should learn as many details as possible regarding their background, the way of entry, progression and exit from the trafficking situation, thus ensuring the best possible interventions that will bring the best possible results to the victims and their lives.

It is important to be understood that social workers should work on all levels of intervention if they want to approach, assist the victims and tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation holistically. Social workers encounter victims on a micro and mezzo level, and sometimes they are the first people the victims meet, hence social workers should be equipped appropriately to be able to identify and assist them effectively on an individual or group level. On a macro level, social workers can work as policy advocates, plan and carry out campaigns and educational workshops, train other professionals in their workplace, and so on.

*Interventions on a micro / mezzo level:*
Even though most of the time, identification of victims is done by the law enforcement, social workers may encounter people who have been trafficked in hospital emergency

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rooms, health clinics and shelters; hence they might be the first person that the potential victim will meet (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). It is important for social workers and health providers, in general, to be able to identify some indicators of possible victims of trafficking. According to Logan et al. (2009), there are three categories of indicators that can determine whether or not an individual is a victim of trafficking: (a) situational indicators, (b) story indicators, and (c) demeanor. The situational indicators concern the living circumstances of the individual such as frequent movements, a lot of people living together and lack of communication in the establishment because of language barriers. The story indicators depend on the skills of interviewers and the types of questions they ask in order to understand how individuals arrived in the country, the area they lived in, their migration or immigration status, who controlled all their personal documents, and so on. Lastly, individuals' demeanor can indicate whether they are possible victims of trafficking, such as their reactions to questions, or their body language; they may seem nervous and afraid, and even evade some questions too.

Moving on, social services and social workers can play a very important role in victims' rehabilitation (psychological treatments), reintegration and reunification with family and community (Lusk & Lucas, 2009). They can adopt the role of coordinator in referring victims to treatment and arranging visits for victims to the "police stations, law offices, hospital, court rooms, and mental health clinics" (Busch-Armendariz, et al., 2014). On this note, social workers should be provided with training by human services programmes related to assisting them in "identifying victims, making proper referrals, and providing clinical treatment" (Ross-Sheriff & Orme, 2015, 9).

*Interventions on a macro level:*
One of the components that social workers could work towards, on a macro level is research concerning the various relationships between the legalisation of prostitution and sexual trafficking and the impact that it has on women and girls (Hodge, 2008). They are actually, ideally positioned to research and evaluate the outcomes but also the effectiveness of various programmes and interventions concerning the victims of trafficking (Hodge, 2014). In fact, they could suggest and design new services / programmes that could incorporate victims' perspectives thus elevating the victims'

voices (ibid). According to Hodge (2014, 117), "multiple theoretical paradigms emphasise the importance of incorporating the voice of oppressed groups into advocacy, education, and practice. Interventions that incorporate clients' perspectives are more likely to be adopted, implemented, and effective". Moreover, they could get involved in both social work advocacy and practice by conducting an assessment study on the identification of victims (how and who identified them, how many identified victims were not able or did not want to assist the law enforcement and how many got deported without receiving any assistance). The findings of such study would help social workers, as well as others, to better understand the victims, therefore policies and programmes could be improved or formed and implemented more effectively (Okech, et al, 2011).

Social workers could also utilise one of the strongest social apparatus, which is social media. Hodge (2008) contends that social workers could use the media and promote a change of norms regarding images of violence and eroticisation. Women and girls are portrayed as objects of sex, degrading them through games, clothing and music - social workers could help in changing that, by taking a stand towards the business owners etc. (Kortla, 2010). Many social workers could also be in a position to develop and implement educational awareness campaigns and could also modify models of behaviours such as language used to address women and girls in prostitution that could be demeaning towards them (Kortla, 2010; Roby, 2005).

Ross-Sheriff & Orme (2015) contend that social workers can approach the multidimensional dilemma of THB through a prevention, intervention, education, training, and advocacy approach. They should be working towards prevention model by planning and implementing programmes "to minimise the risk factors that increase the probability of trafficking activity" (Ross-Sheriff & Orme, 2015, 9). Social workers should be trauma-informed and culturally competent in order to address THB effectively (ibid). They should also get involved in training and educating youth and communities about THB and its consequences and to include THB in the social work programmes of higher-learning institutions (Ahmadi, 2003, p. 14).

In conclusion, social workers can get involved on all levels of intervention (micro, mezzo, and macro). Firstly, based on the findings of the only empirical study of victims' experiences of support services and the corresponding perspectives of professionals published to date, social workers' interventions on a micro level can be more efficient if they use an ecological approach, the strengths-based perspective and the cultural competence framework. If they receive the proper training and acquire the appropriate tools and techniques, then they could manage the victims of trafficking more effectively and ethically correct. In addition, if social workers do have the proper knowledge of everything that concerns THB including the services available for their assistance, then they could be more effective with reintegration and family unification. On a more macro level, they could organise and conduct awareness campaigns, conferences, seminars and workshops in schools, the army, and in universities. Lastly, they could be involved in research regarding the development of empirical data by applying various theories in order to assist and protect the victims of trafficking, such as complexity theory, multi-ecological frameworks and feminist theory. They could also get involved with the evaluation of existing programmes and services, needs assessment for the creation of new programmes or services for tackling the issue or protecting the victims of trafficking. In this way, they could contribute to the social work literature concerning trafficking of human beings which is, so far, meagre.

## 8.7    Conclusion

Discussing trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is very complex, even the term itself is full of contradictions. Through the discussion of this chapter's findings, it is highlighted that the government of Cyprus does not adequately address the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in social policies and social work practice. The system is weak and albeit the fact that the government recognises the weaknesses of the system and introduces actions to address them, there is an issue with implementation as the participants of this study perceive it. The government of Cyprus has the tools and

methods to make changes but, according to the participants, due to cultural impediments, the changes happen at a very slow pace. More details, though, on the conclusions of this study are presented in the next and final chapter.

# CHAPTER 9:          CONCLUSIONS

## 9.1    Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions on the study's aims which are to examine the weaknesses and gaps in government policy and social work practice in Cyprus regarding the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and the protection of victims. Furthermore, to examine how the government of Cyprus, the NGOs and the women identified as having been trafficked, perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the policies and practices, and provide information on how to improve policies and social work practices. Conclusions are presented on: the research process, theoretical implications (constructivism and reflexivity), findings, the study's limitations, the study's contribution to the body of knowledge in this field, and recommendations for future research.

## 9.2    Research process

This study took place over seven years, during which new literature appeared and policy changes took place. The data collection took place at different periods of time; the interviews with the women identified as having been trafficked were conducted a year and a half before the interviews with the key stakeholders. Within that year and a half, legislation was amended and some policies within the government services were changed. These changes were taken into consideration in the data analysis.

## 9.3    Theoretical implications – the use of constructivist approach and reflexivity

The study used constructivism to collect and analyse the data. The researcher, by using a constructivist approach, was able to examine the way the participants manufacture

their experiences and perceptions of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation through their interaction and experience of the policy and support system in Cyprus. In addition, the researcher applied reflexivity throughout her study aiming to mitigate any ethical pitfalls.

*Constructivism – Victims of trafficking:*

Common characteristics were found on how participants' views where constructed based on their nationality, religion and culture, which could mean that common beliefs and cultural traits play an important role on how they perceive and shape their views and understandings. For example, the two women from African countries (Nigeria and Cameroon) were less talkative and less willing to share their stories, which were the worst out of all the stories. They were both trafficked from back home and were in the trafficking situation for a year and a half. They both looked fragile from all the pain they had been through but at the same time they seemed strong and able to survive through it all. On the contrary, the two women from Morocco were very talkative and open about their trafficking experience, especially about the lack of help they received from the government. However, they were also scared about their family finding out what happened to them. They both had very close relationships with their families back home. So, they both exhibited difficulties in accepting what had happened to them and move forward. The two Romanian women seemed to be more familiar with the Cypriot culture and they were more concerned on how to make a living and from where they could get financial help to be able to live in Cyprus.

*Constructivism – Key stakeholders:*

Throughout the interviews with the key stakeholders, the questions the researcher used aimed to highlight the way their knowledge and perceptions of the trafficking of women for commercial sex were constructed but also their perceptions and stances on the social policies and social work practice. Most of them believe that some of the system's weaknesses and the delays on policy actions and changes are due to stereotypes, prejudice and personal gain of government employees in positions of power. It was also found that there are still stereotypes and prejudice towards women who are involved in

prostitution but also gender inequality which is still affecting women's position in the Cypriot families and society. As Pickup (1998) asserts "violence and abuses linked to sex work are due to stigmatisation of prostitution, and the unequal power relations involved in the work, at all levels" (p. 44). Participants stated that patriarchy still exists and it is observed in the way most departments in the government are structured and operated. The greatest example of this would be, the structure of the parliament of Cyprus, which consists of 56 parliamentarians of whom only ten are women. It is something that Mrs Christodoulou, from MIGS, highlighted as the aim of one of their new projects, to empower and prepare more women to demand a position in the parliament hoping that someday the number of men and women parliamentarians could be equal. All participants (key stakeholders) of this study were women. Even though the decisions for changes are not made by them, it is very positive where they are in positions that they can at least make an impact. It was also stated by Pickup (1998), that the "appropriate policy responses should … be based on an empowering approach; increasing women's opportunities to help themselves is a more effective use of resources to prevent trafficking than the abolitionist strategies of the past" (p. 44). Ten years later, Melrose and Barrett (2006) found that when women are economically and politically strong, they will not be purchasable for the base use of vice. Today, in 2017, the attention of governments has still not shifted towards the development of the economic and political strength of women.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the government is structured to serve the bureaucratic battle that the employees must endure every day and not the service receivers and people in need. There is no doubt that bureaucracy is important, but if the services are understaffed and the communication tools are not up to the technological standards of the rest of the world, then it is certain that the coordination on an administrative level and between the various services becomes almost impossible. Nonetheless, even if the communication matter is solved and the services are well balanced as far as personnel are concerned, the abovementioned cultural barriers might still negatively influence the political and social changes.

Finlay (2003) states that reflexivity is a fact in research, so researchers should focus more on how to do it and not avoid it. Therefore, firstly, the researcher had to be reflective on why she chose the specific research questions. As a social worker, who has worked in Cyprus for the last 16 years (since 2001), the researcher had already shaped an opinion on how the government and the local authorities work. In order to answer the research questions that were focusing on the weaknesses of the government system, the researcher had to differentiate her opinion from the opinions of the participants and sustain objectivity during the interviews and the interpretation of the data which, according to Finlay (2003), is almost impossible. Hence, it is acknowledged by the researcher that to some degree, her own reflexion on the matter was imbued within the findings and conclusions which means that if another researcher used the data of this study, they would certainly produce different findings and results.

As far as the women who have been trafficked (participants) are concerned, the researcher acknowledges that she was affected by the victims' stories and their disappointment towards the government because they did not receive the help they needed. She felt compelled to defend them and make their voices heard. As a woman and a Cypriot social worker, the researcher found it hard to put aside her own opinion of the 'helping system' that she had experienced by volunteering at the NGOs working with women who have been trafficked, but also to put aside all the stereotypes that exist among the Cypriot culture and Cypriot people, and she tried not to give in to the victims' anger and disappointment and reciprocate on those feelings. It is for sure, though, that their voices hit some sensitive strings that the researcher had to be wary of, when she carried on the interviews with the key stake holders.

Being reflective with the participants (key stakeholders) was challenging especially with the government employees. The researcher recognises that her own emotions and opinion about the government services, which was shaped by the victims' testimonies and her personal experience as a social worker in Cyprus, could have affected the way she conducted and construed the interviews with the participants (key stakeholders). To

avoid any pitfalls, she made sure to study the services adequately and the interviewees'
backgrounds and be focused on the aims of the study.


## 9.4    Findings

Even though the data collection was completed a year ago, the findings of this study are
still significant since no one else has addressed this issue yet. As previously mentioned,
the empirical studies conducted in Cyprus regarding trafficking of women for sexual
exploitation, or any type of trafficking, are very few. There is no other empirical study in
Cyprus which examines social policies and social work practices other than this one,
therefore, this study is unique in its kind.

The conclusions of this study will be outlined by answering the following research
questions: (1) Has trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus been
adequately addressed in social policy and social work practice? (2) How is trafficking of
women for sexual exploitation perceived by the government, NGOs and victims? (3)
How can the government of Cyprus improve its efforts to tackle trafficking in women for
sexual exploitation and protect the victims?

Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus has not been adequately
addressed in social policy and social work practice. Even though, the government has
ratified many policies from the European acquis, it lacks in implementation. The
government of Cyprus has drafted and passed an explicit legislation on THB which has
been amended twice so far with the latest one being the Law 60(I)/2014 titled: 'The
Prevention of and the Tackling of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the
Protection of Victims Law'. It depicted the Palermo Protocol and the EU Directive
2011/36/EE and it has also passed other national directives and legislations which
complement the legislation on THB. However, although the demand for the purchase of
sex has been criminalised as in the Swedish model, there has been no convictions of
sex buyers so far since it is hard to prove they were aware ('could reasonably assume')
the sex worker was a victim of trafficking at the time. Even if they were convicted, there

are no other programmes available to educate the offenders and prevent them from using again the sex services. Hence, it could not be any different from the Swedish model. The NGOs have identified the weakness of the specific legislative article and they demanded for an amendment of the law. The other multidisciplinary coordinating group's members have agreed and have sent the suggestion to be processed. However, prostitution is legal in Cyprus but buyers of sex will only be prosecuted if they used the services from a victim of trafficker but not a sex worker. This, in practice, could be very confusing so it should be taken into consideration before the amendment of the law. In addition, even though Lieutenant, Rita Superman, Head of the Anti-Trafficking Police Unit, has been awarded by the Department of State (USA) with the "2016 Trafficking Hero" award, and the unit's work has been acknowledged by the government, NGOs and the victims of trafficking, it is hindered by the weaknesses of the legislation regarding the prosecution of the sex buyers.

As far as the protection of the victims is concerned, Cyprus has affiliated with the EU Directive and has included in the legislation, 60(I)/2014, the right for the victims to claim financial compensation from their trafficker and the state. However, compensation from the state is not clarified and has not been given to any victim yet. There is, however, one victim who is in the process of claiming compensation from her trafficker. In addition, the identified victims are not deported and have the right to stay in Cyprus. They receive an immediate residence permit which is renewed every year. This right has also been adopted by the EU Directive and Palermo Protocol. They can also apply for political asylum if their life or freedom is at risk back home and if they chose to have a more permanent status. Moreover, although the government provides a shelter for the women identified as having been trafficked, it lacks in support programmes. Furthermore, SWS have no policies concerning the protection of victims of trafficking besides the supervision of the state shelter. They have no specialisation and no special department that would only handle victims of trafficking. They have an interdepartmental guide on handling victims of trafficking which is not publicised or accessible to other services. Moreover, social work practice in Cyprus, regarding victims of trafficking, does not exist. Furthermore, good practices from other countries are also absent. The social

work practice that was analysed in this study was mostly descriptive. Lastly, the government is not investing money for prevention efforts. Most of the awareness campaigns, research, conferences, seminars and workshops in schools and army are done by NGOs with their own money or EU funds.

Regarding the conclusions of the findings and in response to the second research question, first, all the participants (key stakeholders, both government services and NGOs) believe that sex trafficking is a serious problem in Cyprus and second, most of them believe that it exists because of the cultural tolerance towards prostitution and racism / xenophobia which increases the demand for the purchase of sex. They assert that gender inequality, as well as racism / xenophobia, shape the degree of the demand but also the political structure of services and hierarchy which is dominated by men. There is still inequality in the salaries of men and women in private business and, generally, there is discrimination on positions of power. In addition, foreign women in Cyprus are faced with demeaning behaviours and sexual harassment both from Cypriot men and women. Hence, the aim to decrease the demand for sex will be very challenging in a culture and society like the Cypriot one. Most of the participants (key stakeholders) contend that the government, besides the need for further reformation of the legislation, should be aiming to fund more awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops in the army, schools, academic institutions, focusing on the young population as an ultimate goal to change the way young people view sex, sex purchase and how they view themselves. As it was found in Marinova and James' study (2012), the sex trafficking market is negatively affected when the citizens are well informed about it and also when the police work and methods are strict and rigorous.

Moreover, as far as the women identified as having been trafficked and who participated in this study are concerned, the way they perceived trafficking for sexual exploitation in Cyprus depended on the degree of help and support they received after they escaped the trafficking situation which depended on the severity of their needs. The more severe their needs were, the less help they received and the less satisfied they were with the support they received and the support services available to them. This conclusion

indicates that the state is not structured adequately to support victims that were severely traumatised and their efforts, knowledge and skill to support them are not efficient. However, most victims were very satisfied with the support provided to them by the NGOs, specifically Cyprus Stop Trafficking and Caritas Cyprus. This finding confirms that the NGOs are substituting for the government's responsibilities but with no financial support from it.

In response to the third and final research question, the findings show that there is a need for change in policy and social work practice and that the government can react and act towards this change by addressing the following points:

- Further amendment of the legislation in articles 17 and 35 concerning the demand for the purchase of sex and the right of victims to claim financial compensation from their traffickers and the state;

- Police investigations and proceedings – they need to acquire better skills in interviewing victims of trafficking, and better tools and methods to investigate cases of trafficking;

- The judges and lawyers should be trained and specialised in THB cases so they can better understand the need for prioritising these cases;

- The shelter should provide the victims with more programmes and activities to better help the victims to cope with their trauma which will also benefit and facilitate the police investigations;

- The SWS should change their policies concerning the support they are offering to the victims of trafficking, which is very limited, because they are understaffed and they are not specialised;

- The NGOs should be funded by the government to continue giving the support they give to the victims since the government is unable to do so. Cooperation/memorandum protocols should be signed between government services and NGOs;

- The government should shift its focus towards prevention efforts by investing more money in: educational programmes within educational settings and in the army aiming to educate the young people about gender equality, racism, xenophobia and THB and research for better understanding of the situation in Cyprus but also for service evaluations.

Recapitulating, THB in Cyprus is not considered as high priority by the government, hence there is no political volition to tackle it. There is also the issue of cultural tolerance of prostitution and gender segregation which facilitates the existence of sex trafficking. Therefore, it seems that sex trafficking in Cyprus is culturally constructed and the social policies and social work practice are also influenced and constructed by the way the culture and society is built. The government of Cyprus should hire more women in positions of power; women that are more sensitive towards vulnerable populations and that possess the abilities of being versatile and favour diversity and multiculturalism. The young people should be educated about gender equality from young age and the government should invest in the education system providing the children and the youth with educational programmes concerning gender equality and self-knowledge and respect. Finally, social work is a profession that can work in all levels of intervention. The professional social workers in Cyprus should work together to make their work and role known in the society and in the political apparatus. Maybe, this way, changes can happen more quickly and the people who have been trafficked could be helped more effectively. However, social work practice in Cyprus is weak not because the SWS are understaffed, but because there is a lack of understanding by the society and the political apparatus of what social workers can really do. During her incumbency in the Cyprus Social Work Association (2013-2015), the researcher along with the other members of the board of directors, often held meetings concerning the aforesaid issue and have planned actions to resolve it which the new board of directors (2016-2018) is continuing. Unfortunately, as it was mentioned in point 8.2, changes in Cyprus take a long time to happen.

## 9.5    Study's contribution to the body of knowledge in trafficking of women for sexual exploitation

This study provides information on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation and makes several theoretical and practical contributions to the literature on THB. It helps in understanding the way social policies and social work practices are formed and implemented but also it can make some generalisations.

Firstly, this study is the first of its kind. It is the first empirical study on women identified as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation which examines the social policies and social work practices in Cyprus. Hence, it adds to the minimal literature that already exists in Cyprus regarding THB and, even though the findings are almost two years old, they are still significant since no other similar study has been published yet.

Secondly, this study has utilised a constructivist framework to portray the realities of the victims and key stake holders concerning trafficking of victims for sexual exploitation in Cyprus. As Bryman (2004) stated, realities are socially constructed and created by the perceptions and actions of social actors. Therefore, this study has contributed to the understanding of Cypriot policy and practice through a constructivist approach and the realities of the people interviewed.

Thirdly, through this study, the weaknesses of the 'support system' are found, hence the findings shed light on where the government can focus on now and in the future, in order to tackle trafficking of women for sexual exploitation more efficiently. The findings can also be generalised since the people interviewed are the people mostly involved in influencing policy change.

Fourthly, this study provides an insight into the victims' trafficking experience, the struggle and the life after the trafficking situation, and hopefully, it has contributed to the change of attitudes towards them.

Finally, the study contributes to social work theory on how it can be implemented and on

which levels, in regard to people who have been trafficked. So far, in Cyprus, social work practice has had no relation to the work that can be performed with victims of trafficking. There is no literature on social work practice in Cyprus and no examples of good practices. Therefore, this study contributes, at least on an operational level, to knowledge on how social work can be applied to victims of trafficking.

## 9.6    Study's limitations

Firstly, this study interviewed only seven women identified as having been trafficked and 10 key stakeholders. Even though the information collected from both is very important, a larger number of participants, in both categories, could have benefited from this study more. Thirdly, the participants (key stakeholders) were all women in positions of power, and it would have made the study more interesting if there had been an equal number of men participants as well so that a comparison of perceptions and opinions could be analysed since the topic under research is trafficking in women for commercial sex. Lastly, there were no social workers available to interview who were specialised in trafficking of women besides the two that participated in this study. The social workers from the SWS who come in contact with people who have been trafficked are overloaded with other types of cases as well, hence their support to the victims is limited to financial support. In addition, the fact that they are repositioned, often within the services, affects their work with the victims too. Unfortunately, social work practice in Cyprus, as far as the issue at hand is concerned, is meagre.

## 9.7    Recommendations for future research

Initially a follow up, on the reformation of the legislation regarding criminalisation of demand, could be conducted through a research which would evaluate its implementation and examine its potential impediments such as: Will the buyers of sex be convicted or will there be a conflict with the prostitution legislative status? On a practical level, will the buyers of sex be prosecuted only if they buy services from a

victim of trafficking or from a prostitute too? Does that mean that prostitution in Cyprus should be illegal? Moreover, there is a need for a continuous evaluation of the government's efforts to tackle the issue, a study to evaluate the NAP actions' implementation, and also a study which will focus on the evaluations of services and programmes within the government and NGOs. Furthermore, another study could focus its attention on the migration flow which has increased in the last few years because of the war situations in the Middle East and whether the migration flow has increased sex trafficking in Cyprus. It is a point that the study at hand has not referred to much. Lastly, more empirical studies are needed in Cyprus as far as social work practices are concerned with people who have been trafficked. They could start as case studies applying the multi-ecological framework Edwards and Mika (2016) suggested, to assess the persons in the environment and their adaptation abilities for survival and development or as Bushc-Armendariz, et al. (2014, 10) suggested, "research is needed to better understand the impact of victimisation including risk factors, vulnerability, impact of trauma and assault, resources for full restoration, and implications for survivors that cooperate in criminal investigations and prosecution."

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# APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1:    Participant Information Sheet for interviews with key stakeholders

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Interviews – Key Stakeholders**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Topic:** | **Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus: Social policy and social work practices** |

The information that follows is about a research project that you are being invited to participate. It will explain what the research is about and why your participation is so important. For this reason, please take some time reading and understanding the information provided to you before deciding whether or not you wish to participate in this project. Please do not hesitate to ask me about anything which is not clear enough. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

## What is the purpose of the study?

My name is Panayiota Christodoulou and I am a PhD student at the University of Bristol (UK) in the School for Policy Studies. I believe that by exploring the phenomenon of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus through social work practise and policy I will have a better understanding of what is applied or not by the government / local authorities / non-governmental organisations, to tackle the phenomenon and to protect the victims of trafficking. Furthermore, this study will surface the gaps and weaknesses of social work practice and policy towards combating trafficking of women and it will suggest ways for improving them.

## Why have I been chosen?

Your participation in this research project is very important. Human trafficking is such a sensitive subject that everybody can have strong emotions about it even if they work in high ranking positions and may not be able to express themselves freely. You were chosen to be a part of this project for your views, both as professionals and human beings, on what trafficking in women involves and on what it is done by the government, local authorities and non-governmental organizations in Cyprus.

## What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part in this research project you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire and then if you are willing to be interviewed you could contact me by email or a call to arrange a meeting for the interview at your workplace and at a time of your convenience. Before the meeting you can call or email me for any questions and queries you may have about the interview. At the time of the interview you will be asked whether you have read and understood all the information that was sent to you and whether you have any other questions or queries to make before starting the interview. The interview should not last more than an hour and a half and the questions asked will concern your positions on the matter in hand and your perception on what is been done to tackle the phenomenon of trafficking in women. The interview will be recorded. If you do not want to be recorded, I will be taking notes while we talk.

## What will happen if I want to withdraw my permission to participate?

You can stop the interview at any time and you are not obliged to give a reason, although it would be helpful to me if you could explain. The data collected from you will be destroyed.

## Anonymisation:

If you are a participant in a key position and in a key placement for the human trafficking issue the researcher would prefer to state your name and position in her study for strengthening and validating the results of her data. The transcript of the interview will be available to you, however is most convenient to you, if you would like to discuss it with me before finalising it. However if anonymity is what you prefer then the researcher will make sure that your personal details will be protected as it is expected. For those of you who are not in a key placement then anonymity will not be questioned and all the necessary measures will be applied. Your personal data will not be shown anywhere, not even in the transcripts. Names will be coded and put in a safe place which I will only know. In addition, I will be the only one to know how to decode them. On the recordings or note takings no names will be mentioned or written.

## Limits of confidentiality:

If during the interview you reveal information you were not supposed to, the researcher will be responsible for filtering it or deleting it so that you are not put under any risk. The written report will be discussed and agreed with you.

## What will my information be used for?

Your information will be processed and analysed. It will then be included in my PhD thesis which will be potentially published as a book and some academic journal articles.

## Further contact details:

If you need any further information please don not hesitate to contact me on Tel:********; Email: ptxpc@bristol.ac.uk. Or for any other verification about my studies please contact my supervisor Ms Ann Singleton on Tel: (0117) 331 0926, Alt. (0117) 954 6755; Email: ann.singleton@bristol.ac.uk.

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Interviews – Victims of Trafficking**

| Topic:        Trafficking Project |
|---|

This information sheet will try to explain what the research is about and what it asks from you to do. Your participation is very important so please take some time to read and understand the information given to you before deciding whether or not you wish to participate in this research. Please ask me if there is anything that you do not understand. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

## What is the purpose of the study?

My name is Panayiota Christodoulou and I am studying for my doctorate's degree at the University of Bristol in England. I study trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus. I am trying to look at what services, laws and regulations exist or do not exist to protect and support the trafficking victims and whether they are working well or not. When I finish searching and evaluating everything I will be able to give some suggestions to help the victims of trafficking.

## Why have I been chosen?

I am inviting you because I believe that you have been trafficked. I am very interested in hearing the views of as many women / victims of trafficking as possible, about the help and services they have received after they escaped from their trafficking situations. If you could tell me how you managed to leave and what type of help you found, I will be able to understand what Cyprus is generally doing to help women/victims of trafficking and to stop trafficking situation in general.

## What will happen if I take part?

If you wish to take part in my research please contact me directly (email or call). Or you can tell the social worker who gave you this information. We can fix a time to meet. We can meet at an office, which will be safe for both of us. The meeting should not take more than one hour and a half. Before meeting me you can call or email for any questions you may have about the interview.

You will be asked to sign a piece of paper (Consent Form) which is given to you with this sheet.  I will explain it at the beginning of the interview. With your permission the interview will be recorded.  Your

name will not be mentioned at all during the interview. If you do not want to be recorded then I will take notes. I would like you to talk about your experience of trying to get away from the trafficking situation and what kind of help you got from the government, the local authorities and the non-governmental organizations that against the trafficking situation in Cyprus. The information you give me I will use it to form the interviews with people that work in all of the places I have mentioned in the previous sentence.

## What will happen if I don't take part?

You have the right to say no and not take part in this project. It will not have any effect on the services you receive. Even when you accept to participate you can stop at any time but up to a reasonable time afterwards and you do not have to give any reason.

## Keeping things private and confidential:

Your personal information, anything that can give away your real identity, will not be shown anywhere. Not even in my notes. We can decide together on whatever name you want me to use (a fake name) in my study and that is what I will write in my notes too. You do not even have to tell me your real name if you do not want to. All my notes and writing will be put in a safe place which I will only know.

## Limits of confidentiality:

Everything you say during the interview will be treated in confidence unless you mentioned that you, or someone else, is at specific risk of significant harm. In this situation I would need to discuss it with a worker from the service.

## What will my information be used for?

The information I will get from you will be put it in my final thesis (study) which will be published as a book. I will use some information from it to also write academic articles. Your information will be safe at all times and it will all be destroyed 3 years after I finish my thesis.

## Further contact details:

**If you need to know any more, before you decide to take part, please feel free to contact me on tel: \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*; email: ptxpc@bristol.ac.uk. Or for any other questions about my studies please contact my supervisor at Bristol University Ms Ann Singleton on Tel: (0117) 331 0926, Alt. (0117) 954 6755; Email: ann.singleton@bristol.ac.uk.**

**Consent Form**

**Interviews – Key Informants**

| **Topic:**        **Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus:** **Social policy and social work practices** |
|---|

| *Please write your initials next to every point you agree with and is relevant to you* | *Initials* |
|---|---|

- I have read an understood the participant information sheet that was provided to me   _____

- Both participant information sheet and consent form were clearly explained to me before the beginning of the interview   _____

- I am fully aware of confidentiality matters and I abide by them   _____

- The limits of confidentiality were clearly explained to me before the beginning of the interview and I accept them   _____

- I understand that the researcher is responsible of filtering the information I give her

  _____

- I was not obliged by anyone to participate in this project and I understand that I can withdraw at any point of the research and up to a reasonable time afterwards   _____

- I have no objection for the interview to be digitally recorded or for notes taken   _____

- I understand that all my identifying features will be removed from the report and my name will not be revealed in any way     **OR**   _____

- I understand that because of my key / unique position in the human trafficking issue my identification features will be revealed in the report   _____

- I understand how the data, collected for the purposes of this study, will be used by the researcher and it was clearly explained to me how it will be safely stored   _____

- I am happy and wish to participate in this research project by being interviewed   _____

_____

Participant's Name                          Signature                          Date

_____

Researcher's Name                           Signature                          Date

**Consent Form**

**Interviews – Victims of Trafficking**

| Topic: | Trafficking Project |
|---|---|

| *Please write your initials next to every point you agree with* | *Initials* |
|---|---|
| • I have read and understood the participant information sheet that was given to me | _____ |
| • Both participant information sheet and consent form were clearly explained to me before the beginning of the interview | _____ |
| • The service I am in contact with has provided me with information about the researcher on who she is and what she is doing | _____ |
| • I understand that everything that is said at the interview will not be repeated to anyone else outside the room (confidentiality) | _____ |
| • The limits of confidentiality were clearly explained to me before the beginning of the interview and I accept them | _____ |
| • I understand that if I show any signs of harming myself or others the researcher will break confidentiality and will have to tell others about it to protect me or others | _____ |
| • I was not forced by anyone to participate in this project and I understand that I can stop and leave at any point of the research and up to a reasonable time afterwards | _____ |
| • I agree that the researcher can record my voice or take notes during the interview | _____ |
| • I understand that all the things that may show my identity will be deleted from the researcher's notes and my name will not be shown anywhere in any way | _____ |
| • I understand how the information taken from me will be used by the researcher and it was clearly explained to me how this information will be put away in a safe place | _____ |
| • I am happy and wish to take part in this research project by being interviewed | _____ |

_____

Participant's Name  (Fake Name)                    Signature                              Date

_____

Researcher's Name                                  Signature                              Date

**INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE
FOR KEY INFROMANTS**

**Exploring social policy and social work practice regarding trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation in Cyprus**

| **Policymakers** |
| --- |
| •    Mission and vision for policy making concerning trafficking in women for sexual exploitation |
| •    Role of the government, community and other organisations |
| •    Experiences and difficulties / issues regarding the policies |
| •    Understanding of trafficking victims - social discrimination |
| •    Trafficking victims' rights, duties, identity, participation |
| •    Attitudes towards social integration of the trafficking victims |
| •    Evaluation of policy and services: satisfaction, output and outcome |
| •    Good practices and good policies |
| •    Goals of social work and role of social workers |

| **Managers** |
| --- |
| •    Mission and vision of the organisation |
| •    Services / programs for trafficking victims and for tackling it |
| •    Resource network: government, community and other organisations |
| •    Experiences and difficulties / motivations |
| •    Understanding trafficking and victims: social discrimination |
| •    Attitudes towards social integration of trafficking victims |
| •    Views on trafficking victims' rights, duties, identity, participation |
| •    Role of social work and social workers |
| •    Evaluation of practice and services: satisfaction, output and outcome |
| •    Qualification: supervision and training |
| •    Good practices and good policies |

| Social workers |
| --- |
| • Services / programs for trafficking victims and tackling trafficking |
| • Experiences and difficulties in practice |
| • Motivations in this job |
| • Understanding trafficking and trafficking victims - social discrimination |
| • Attitudes towards social integration of trafficking victims |
| • Views on trafficking victims' rights, duties, identity, participation |
| • Roles of social workers |
| • Reflection in practice |
| • Evaluation of practice and services: satisfaction, output and outcome |
| • Qualifications: supervision and training |
| • Good practices and good policies |
| • Goal of social work for trafficking and trafficking victims |

**INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE
FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING**

**INTERVIEW No: ………………**

**PARTICIPANT NAME (PSEUDONYM): ………………………………………………………**

**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

AGE:
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:
DATE OF ARRIVAL IN CYPRUS:
TIME IN TRAFFICKING EXPERIENCE:
TIME AWAY FROM THE TRAFFICKING SITUATION:

**GENERAL QUESTIONS:**

- How did you get away from the trafficking situation?

- Who was the first person or organisation / service you got in touch with or who got in touch with you?

- Did you contact the police and/or social services or did they contact you? How helpful were they?

- What is your opinion about the immigration office? Were they helpful?

- From where did you get support and what type of support did you receive, e.g. NGOs?

- Did you or do you know any policies/laws concerning your rights? Were they explained to you? If yes, by who?

- What difficulties/problems do you have now? (A list of support programs and professionals will be provided if there is a need)

- From all the processes and experiences, you had from the government of Cyprus and NGOs what would you change if you could?

## APPENDIX 7: Formal letter to key stakeholders

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of the person addressed: | Panayiota Christodoulou |
| Work Position: | PhD Student |
| Name of organization: | School for Policy Studies |
| Address of organization: | University of Bristol |
| Email: | 8 Priory Road, Bristol |
| Tel: | BS8 1TZ, UK |
| | Email: ptxpc@bristol.ac.uk |
| | Tel: + (357) ******** |

DD/MM/YY

Dear …………………………,

**Subject:** **Request for participation in a PhD research project titled "Exploring trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus through social work and social policy perspective"**

I am a PhD student at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol (UK) researching the above subject. I am also a professional social worker for 12 years and a full time academic in University of Frederick in the Department of Social Work for seven years. I am writing to inquire your participation in this research project through a single interview which will last between half hour and an hour. Enclosed with this letter you will find an information package which includes everything you need to know about the research.

I believe that your knowledge on the phenomenon of human trafficking would be a great asset to my study. For this reason I would really appreciate it if you could spend some of your valuable time to read the information enclosed, and inform me either by email or phone call about your response.

Looking forward to your reply
Please don't hesitate to contact me for any questions or queries.
Thank you in advance

Best Regards

Panayiota Christodoulou
MA, MPhil
Field Work Supervisor
Department of Social Work
School of Social Sciences and Humanities
University of Frederick
Tel: + (357) 22394394, ext. 44111

**Enclosed please find:**
- Student's Validation Letter from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, University of Bristol
- Participants Information Sheet
- Consent Form

## APPENDIX 8: Formal letter to victims of trafficking

<div align="right">
Panayiota Christodoulou<br>
PhD Student<br>
School for Policy Studies<br>
University of Bristol<br>
8 Priory Road, Bristol<br>
BS8 1TZ, UK<br>
Email: ptxpc@bristol.ac.uk<br>
Tel: + (357) ********
</div>

DD/MM/YY

To whom it may concern,

I am a PhD student at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol (UK). I am studying **trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus.**

I am also a professional social worker for 12 years and I have been teaching in the University of Frederick in the Department of Social Work for seven years.

I would like to meet you to talk about your experience on how you escaped from the trafficking situation. I hope you will agree. Everything you need to know about this research is attached with this letter.

Your anonymity will be safe (your name will be shown nowhere). I will only use your voice and that is what the other interviewees will hear through my questions. The only thing I will ask from you before you decide if you want to take part in this study is to spend some time to carefully read all the information that I included with this letter.

If you do decide to take part please call me directly or inform the person that gave you this letter and information package.

Looking forward to your reply
Please feel free to contact me for any questions
Thank you in advance

Best Wishes


Panayiota Christodoulou
MA, MPhil
Field Work Supervisor
Department of Social Work
School of Social Sciences and Humanities
University of Frederick
Tel: + (357) 22394394, ext. 44111


**Enclosed please find:**
- Student's Validation Letter from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, University of Bristol
- Participants Information Sheet
- Consent Form

**SCHOOL FOR POLICY STUDIES: RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
**APPLICATION FORM**

- This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School for Policy Studies, both staff and doctoral postgraduate students.
- See the Ethics Procedures document for clarification of the process.
- All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding.
- See the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.
- Please stick to the word limit provided. D**o not** attach your funding application or research proposal.

**Key project details:**

**1. Proposer's Name**          Panayiota Christodoulou

**2. Project Title**          Exploring trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus through social work and social policy perspective

**3. Project start date**  *9 / 2009*          **End date**  *3 / 2016*

---

**Who needs to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for your project?**

The SPS REC will only consider those research ethics applications which do not require submission elsewhere.  As such, you should make sure that your proposed research does not fall within the jurisdiction of the NRES system:
http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/approval-requirements/ethical-review-requirements/
If you are not sure where you should apply please discuss it with either the chair of the committee or the Faculty Ethics Officer who is based in RED.

Currently NRES are not expected to consider applications in respect of activities that are not research: ie. clinical audit, service evaluation and public health surveillance.  In addition REC review is not normally required for research involving NHS or social care staff recruited as research participants by virtue of their professional role.  Social care research projects which are funded by the Department of Health, must always be reviewed by a REC within the Research Ethics Service for England.  Similarly research which accesses unanonymised patient records must be reviewed by a REC and NIGB.

---

**Do you need additional insurance to carry out your research?**

Whilst staff and doctoral students will normally be covered by the University's indemnity insurance there are some situations where it will need to be checked with the insurer.  If you are conducting research with: Pregnant research subjects or children under 5 you should email: insurance-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk
In addition, if you are working or travelling overseas you should take advantage of the university travel insurance.

---

**Do you need a Criminal Records Bureau Check?**

Please see the current guidance to determine whether you are required to obtain a CRB check:

**4. If your research project requires REC approval elsewhere please tell us which committee, this includes where co-researchers are applying for approval at another institution.**
**Please provide us with a copy of your approval letter for our records when it is available.**

**5. Have all subcontractors you are using for this project (including transcribers, interpreters, and co-researchers not formally employed at Bristol University) agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?**

Yes

No/Not yet      **x**      Note: You must ensure that written agreement is secured before they start to work

Not applicable

**6. If you are a PhD/doctoral student please tell us the name of your research supervisor**

Ms Ann Singleton and Professor John Carpenter

# ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of questions is intended to provide the School Research Ethics Committee with enough information to determine the risks and benefits associated with your research. You should use these questions to assist in identifying the ethical considerations which are important to your research. You should identify any relevant risks and how you intend to deal with them. Whilst the REC does not comment on the methodological design of your study, it will consider whether the design of your study is likely to produce the benefits you anticipate. **Please avoid copying and pasting large parts of research bids or proposals which do not directly answer the questions.** Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

1. **EXPECTED DURATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY:** Please tell us how long each researcher will be working on fieldwork/research activity. For example, conducting interviews between Feb 12 – July 2012. Also tell us how long participant involvement will be. For example: Interviewing 25 professional participants X2 for a maximum of 1 hour per interview.

The PhD student will be the only researcher and all the participants will be directly contacted by her. Interviews will be conducted with key informants and victims of trafficking. All the interviews will take place between February 2014 and June 2014. The victims of trafficking will be interviewed first for an hour each (approximately 20 women) and they will be completed within 2 months. Within the next month the focus groups will take place. Lastly, interviews with key informants (approximately 20 people) will be conducted within 3 months and they will last for an hour. Within those 4 months questionnaires will be sent to key informants who were not able to meet with the researcher.

2. **IDENTITY & EXPERIENCE OF (CO) RESEARCHERS:** Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications, previous research experience, and functions in the proposed research of all those who will be in contact with participants.

N/A

3. **STUDY AIMS/OBJECTIVES [maximum of 200 words]:** Please provide the aims and objectives of your research.

This research project will explore three salient research areas:
- How do Cyprus government, local authorities and non-governmental organizations perceive trafficking in women for sexual exploitations generally and what is their role and actions towards combating it and protecting the victims of trafficking?

- How did the trafficked women experienced their escape from the trafficking situation; what kind of help they found; and what is their opinion about the services and programs for tackling trafficking provided by the government, local authorities and non-governmental organizations of Cyprus?

- What do social workers and social policy makers do or do not do to help in tackling and preventing trafficking in women for sexual exploitation or to support and protect the victims and what more could they do?

This study will argue that Cyprus is seen as a destination country from traffickers because of its people's mentality and tolerance towards prostitution and segregation of genders. Furthermore, it will argue that its cultural mentality and behaviour influence the way policies are formed and social work interventions are planned and conducted. In conclusion, it will explore and assess the effect of existing services / programs' work, involved in tackling human trafficking and protecting the victims.

**4.** **RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY [maximum of 300 words]:** Please tell us what you propose to do in your research and how individual participants, or groups of participants, will be identified and sampled. Please also tell us what is expected of research participants who consent to take part (Please note that recruitment procedures are covered in question 8)

The research method is semi-structured interviews with key informants. The key informants' names have been collected through: the researcher's participation in conferences and seminars, the internet and personal contact. A package of information will be sent to them prior the interview. This will include: a letter from the School for Policy Studies validating the researcher's identity as a PhD student; a Participant Information Sheet; a Consent form; a formal letter from the researcher explaining all the aforementioned; and a short questionnaire (which will be sent by email too if they prefer to send it back by email) concluding with a request to participate in interviews as well and to respond either by phone or email for their participation (an email will follow and then a phone call with those who respond). The key informants will be invited to answer questions about the way they perceive trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus and the way they evaluate their own efforts and the government's, local authorities' and NGOs' efforts to tackle the phenomenon and protect the victims.

The aforementioned information package will also be sent to: (1) the Head of the Social Welfare Services, the guardian of the trafficking victims that stay in the governmental shelter; and (2) the heads of the NGOs Karitas Foundation and Stop Human Trafficking requesting access for conducting the interviews with the victims.

The victims are expected to participate in semi-structured interviews and to share their escaping experience from the trafficking situation and their views on the programs / services and efforts of the government, local authorities and NGOs to tackle human trafficking and to protect its victims. The main sources of recruitment will be the governmental shelter for trafficked women and the two NGOs Karitas Foundation and Cyprus Stop Trafficking. Interpreters will be offered for any language barriers. They will be recruited from the Pancyprian Union of Graduate Translators and Interpreters member of the Cyprus Employees and Industrialists Federation with the criteria of being only women interpreters. Interpreters that the NGOs are using and that the women victims are feeling comfortable with will be used as well.

5. **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND TO WHOM: [maximum 100 words]** Tell us briefly what the main benefits of the research are and to whom.

The main potential benefits of this research concern the victims, NGOs, local authorities and the government. The victims will be able to express their opinion about the help they found or did not find while trying to escape the trafficking situation and to get some answers concerning the key informants' services and their actions. The local authorities and NGOs will gain valuable information that can be manipulated to either improve their existing programs / services or create new ones. The government will be provided with an evaluation report concerning its programs / services' weaknesses and also suggestions for improvements.

6. **POTENTIAL RISKS/HARM TO PARTICIPANTS [maximum of 100 words]:** What potential risks are there to the participants and how will you address them? List any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? You may find it useful to conduct a more formal risk assessment prior to conducting your fieldwork. The University has an example of risk assessment form: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policies/

| RISK | HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED |
|---|---|
| **Trafficking victims:** may get emotional about their experience and worried about | They will be given extra time to be listened and supported using the appropriate sensitivity. Participants have already been informed of other supporting services and programs. It will be |

| | |
|---|---|
| exposing themselves to their traffickers. | clearly explained to them that they will not be asked to give any information about their traffickers or their trafficking experience. |
| **Key informants:** may accidentally disclose delicate information about other key informants or services / programs | The information sheet and consent form will clearly state that data collected from them will be published and the researcher will make sure that all the information is well filtered protecting them from any harm. |

*Add more boxes if needed.

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7. **RESEARCHER SAFETY [maximum of 200 words]:** What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? If you are conducting research in individual's homes or potentially dangerous places then a researcher safety protocol is mandatory. Examples of safety protocols are available in the guidance.

There are minimal risks for the researcher since victims of trafficking are women that have escaped the trafficking situation. The interviews will take place in the governmental shelter, in municipality venues designated by the Mayor or the Head of the Social Welfare and Volunteerism Committee of each municipality, at the two NGOs (Caritas Foundation and Cyprus Stop Trafficking) premises or at the victims' own houses/apartments. The interviews with the key informants will take place at their office during their working hours.

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8. **RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES [maximum of 400 words]:** How are you going to access participants? Are there any gatekeepers involved? Is there any sense in which respondents might be "obliged" to participate (for example because their manager will know, or because they are a service user and their service will know), if so how will this be dealt with.

**Trafficking victims:** They will be recruited from the governmental shelter for trafficking victims and the two NGOs Caritas Foundation and Cyprus Stop Trafficking. An information package will be sent to all three organisations explaining the purpose of the research and asking them for permission to visit their premises and explain the research to potential participants (victims). Some victims will also be contacted through other professional social workers that work in programs under the municipalities such as the 'street social work' program. The information package will be given to the social workers asking them to pass it on to the victims. Before the interview it will be clearly explained to them that they participate on their own free will and that if they abstain the interviews there will be no consequences to them or their situation. An interpreter will be provided to the participants in case they can not use the Greek or English language or they can use their own interpreter if they have one and trust.

**Key informants:** Their names and contact details have been collected through researcher's personal contact by participating in seminars and conferences organized in Cyprus that involved human trafficking. The information package will be sent to them explaining who the researcher is and what the purpose of her research project is, closing with a request to reply either positively or negatively through email or phone call. A questionnaire will be sent with the package and by email asking them to complete it and return it either by post or email. An email will follow explaining the package and asking them to contact me if they are interested to participate in interviews. Their service will be aware of their participation since it is the service which is assessed and not the interviewee.

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9. **INFORMED CONSENT [maximum of 200 words]:** How will this be obtained? Whilst in many cases written consent is preferable, where this is not possible or appropriate this should be **clearly justified**. An age and ability appropriate participant information sheet (PIS) setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent (see

materials table for list of what should be included). If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate.  If you are planning to use photographic or video images in your method then additional/separate consent should be sought from participants which adheres to the relevant data protection legislation. Current guidance is that consent forms should ask participants to initial rather than tick the consent boxes on the consent form.

Please tick the box to confirm that you will keep evidence of the consent forms (either actual forms or digitally scanned forms) in accordance with the data protection legislation, securely for t☐ars. √

All participants with no exception will be provided with a Consent Form (CF) and a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) in order to fully comprehend the reason of their participation and the issues of confidentiality. There will be no data collected if the CF is not signed. The CF drawn for the victims of trafficking will be provided in Greek and English or in any other language the service sees necessary. The participants will be provided with the CF and the PIS prior to their interview in order to process the information about the research in good time. The information will be repeated to them again on the day of the interview clarifying any queries. A CF and PIS will be provided to the key informants as well along with the two aforementioned letters. Because the CF must be signed, confidentiality issues will have to be clearly explained and discussed. However, if the participant is insisting on not signing the CF then the interview will be cancelled. A copy of the CF will be given to the participants.

10. **DATA PROTECTION:** All applicants should regularly take the data protection on-line tutorial provided by the University in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements of current data protection legislation. University policy is that "personal data can be sent abroad if the data subject gives unambiguous written consent. Staff should seek permission from the University Secretary prior to sending personal data outside of the EEA".
Any breach of the University data protection responsibilities could lead to disciplinary action.

Have you taken the mandatory University data protection on-line tutorial in the last 12 months √ s ☐
No
https://www.bris.ac.uk/is/media/training/uobonly/datasecurity/page_01.htm

Do you plan to send any information/data, which could be used to identify a living person, to anybody who works in a country that is not part of the European Union? ☐ Yes √
    No
(see http://www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/the_guide/principle_8.aspx)

    If YES please list the country or countries:

11. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY:**

|  | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| All my data will be stored on a password protected server | √ |  |
| I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted (For advice on encryption see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/encrypt/device/) | √ |  |
| If there is a potential for participants to disclose illegal activity or harm to others you will need to provide a confidentiality protocol. | √ |  |

Please confirm that you warned participants on the information and consent forms that there are limits to confidentiality and that at the end of the project data will be stored for 10 years on appropriate storage facility.
https://www.acrc.bris.ac.uk/acrc/storage.htm                                         Confirmed
√

12. **SHARING DATA AND DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS [maximum 200 words]:** Are you planning to send copies of data to participants for them to check/comment on?  If so, in what format and under what conditions?  What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc?  If you plan to archive your interview transcripts then ensure that consent is obtained.

Copies of data for the participants will be given upon request. The whole thesis will be published as a book and articles will derive from it. They will be published in relevant academic journals. Some reports will be produced which will concern the results about the services / programs evaluation including suggestions for improvements.

13. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**:  Please identify which of the following documents, and how many, you will be submitting within your application:  Guidance is given at the end of this document (appendix 1) on what each of these additional materials might contain.

| ADDITIONAL MATERIAL | NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS: |
|---|---|
| Participants information sheet (s) | 2 |
| Consent form (s) | 2 |
| Confidentiality protocol | |
| Researcher safety protocol | |
| Recruitment letters/posters/leaflets | |
| Photo method information sheet | |
| Photo method consent form | |
| Risk assessment form | |
| Support information for participant | |
| 3$^{rd}$ party confidentiality agreement | 1 |
| Other information | |

Please DO NOT send your research proposal or research bid as the committee will not look at this.

**SUBMITTING & REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:**

To submit your application you should create a **single PDF document** which contains your application form and all additional material and submit this information to the SPS REC admin.  Zaheda Tariq, Zaheda.Anwar@bristol.ac.uk
If you are having problems with this then please contact Zaheda to discuss.

Your form will then be circulated to the SPS Research Ethics Committee who will review your proposal on the basis of the information provided in this single PDF document.  The likely response time is outlined in the 'Ethics Procedures' document.  For staff applications we try to turn these around in 2-3 weeks. Doctoral student applications should be submitted by the relevant meeting deadline and will be turned around in 4 weeks.

Should the committee have any questions or queries after reviewing your application, the chair will contact you directly.   If the committee makes any recommendations you should confirm, in writing, that you will adhere to these recommendations before receiving approval for your project.

Should your research change following approval it is **your responsibility** to inform the committee in writing and seek clarification about whether the changes in circumstance require further ethical consideration.

**Failure to obtain Ethical Approval for research is considered research misconduct by the University and is dealt with under their current misconduct rules.**


Chair: e.williamson@bristol.ac.uk
Date form updated by committee:  March 2012.

**School for Policy Studies**

University of
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6 May 2014

Panayiota Christodoulou
School for Policy Studies
University of Bristol
8 Priory Road

Dear Panayiota

**Title:   *Exploring trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in Cyprus through social work and social policy perspective***

The School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application with regard to this project and we have received your responses to our requests for clarification.  As such I am happy to provide REC approval for this project.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

*(on behalf of)*

**Beth Tarleton**
Chair of the SPS Research Ethics Committee