



**Interdisciplinary Centre for Law, Alternative and Innovative Methods (ICLAIM)**  
**Written contributions following ICLAIM's participation in**  
**the Constructive Dialogues on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants**

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ICLAIM is a non-profit organisation based in Cyprus whose members are credited with local, regional, and global initiatives focusing on diverse fields of the law in the real world, through alternative and innovative methods. We work very closely with internationally respected and distinguished researchers and academics as well as key industry partners and professional, including the public sector, in Cyprus, Europe and the wider region.

Professor Stephanie Laulhe Shaelou, founder and director of ICLAIM, and Dr Demetra Loizou, resident expert at ICLAIM, had the honour of participating in the Constructive Dialogues on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, which took place on the 4 and 9 October 2023, respectively.

The constructive dialogues provided a unique setting to hear the perspectives and input of leading experts in the field from around the world, all of whom are faced with similar challenges but also problems which may be particular in their regions and scope of work. In light of what was discussed in the context of the constructive dialogues, we would like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts and recommendations as a means of promoting further discussion and engagement among civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

- 1) A recurrent issue during the constructive dialogues pertained to the significance of collecting and assessing data on human trafficking and smuggling. While considerable research is undertaken as regards both criminal activities, the results are often hidden locally and/or

outdated. This undermines the potential of such research to yield an impactful contribution to the fight against these phenomena. In this respect, we would like to emphasise the relevance of factors within and outside a country/territory when it comes to understanding the number of the victims, their profiles and the methods employed by human traffickers and smugglers etc. These 'push' and 'pull' factors are of outmost importance in the context of **strengthening the collection and analysis of data both on human trafficking and migrant smuggling**. In this context, civil society organisations such as ICLAIM, which undertake comprehensive research on human trafficking and smuggling, have a crucial role to play in assisting the national authorities and other relevant stakeholders in formulating appropriate responses as well as identifying gaps both in terms of law and practice. At the same time, research and data collection on human trafficking and smuggling are an invaluable tool to the national authorities when it comes to completing the self-assessment questionnaires in the context of the Review Mechanism.

- 2) The Constructive Dialogues on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants seek to engage civil society with respect to two distinct but interrelated phenomena. In this respect, we would like to highlight the unfortunate connections between human trafficking and smuggling; a crime which starts as smuggling may quickly turn into human trafficking. There may be important consequences, especially for the victims, if the two criminal activities are not dealt with in parallel where appropriate. Thus, a more holistic approach towards human trafficking and smuggling would enhance the ability of national authorities to build capacity, formulate tailored responses and adopt victim-centred approaches. Lastly, such an approach would strengthen the national authorities' ability to carry out the self-assessment questionnaires for the purposes of the Review Mechanism. In this respect, we would like to recommend in the form of a best practice **the adoption of a more concerted approach towards human trafficking and smuggling in migrants**.

For the purposes of this constructive dialogue, we shared some of our knowledge and experience on examining, detecting, and understanding human trafficking and smuggling in Cyprus, and in particular human trafficking and smuggling across the UN-controlled buffer zone. To date, through our work on human trafficking in Cyprus, several outputs have been produced, these being primarily research papers (e.g., reports and good practice handbooks) and webinar trainings. In the context of this constructive dialogue, we would like to take this opportunity to share a number of recommendations as a means of enhancing efforts to combat human trafficking, as well as smuggling, across the Green Line. These recommendations are included in a Handbook of Good Practices prepared by ICLAIM and its project partners. Our outputs, including the Handbook of Good Practices are available below.

Undoubtedly, lessons learned are of great value not only in the Cypriot context, but also in other analogous situations around the world.

#### Recommendations

1. Combined and regular data collection
2. Improving coordination among relevant public bodies
3. Enhancing the capacities of public bodies, legal professionals and judiciary
4. Raising awareness of the general public on the phenomena of smuggling and legal trafficking
5. Raising awareness and knowledge level of youth and vulnerable groups towards the risks of smuggling and human trafficking

6. Improving the educational environment
7. Empowering the victims to reach the goal of self-sufficiency and reintegration
8. Strengthening cooperation between civil society and the authorities
9. Receiving consultation from NGOs
10. The role of the legislature
11. Improving judicial proceedings
  - a. The need to overcome chronic delays in justice
  - b. The need to overcome other key obstacles which have direct effect on justice
12. Improving the legal framework in the northern part of Cyprus

For more information on our work on human trafficking and smuggling please see:  
<https://htsproject.uclancyprus.ac.cy/>