

**FRA MEETING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND NHRB COMMUNICATORS  
ON THE REPORT PRESENTATION OF FRA’S PROJECT ‘SEVERE FORMS  
OF LABOUR EXPLOITATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION’ (SELEX)**

**MEETING REPORT**

**05-06 May 2015**

***Report compiled by FRA FRP Team***



This meeting brought together 11 civil society representatives, 3 representatives from NHRBs and an ENNHRI representative to discuss the upcoming launch of the report on “Severe labour exploitation: workers moving within or into the European Union. States’ obligations and victims’ rights’ (SELEX). The aim of the meeting was to draw from the experiences, expertise and input of the participants, to develop a joint communication strategy for FRA’s upcoming report, which will enable the widest possible dissemination of the results and create a stronger impact for change in the longer term. Some of the significant points of

discussion included the key messages of the report, the relevant target audiences on which to focus, and possible channels, tools and activities for enhancing its impact upon publication. The meeting format was conceived in such a way as to enable every participant to effectively contribute to the outcomes of the meeting.

**Who participated?**

• LEFÖ Beratung, Bildung und Begleitung für Migrantinnen, Austria
• Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, Austria
• Payoke, Belgium
• Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), Belgium
• Jesuit Refugee Service Europe, Belgium
• Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights Foundation, Bulgaria
• Center for the Study of Democracy, Bulgaria
• Human Rights Centre, Finland
• Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, Ireland

• Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (& FRP Advisory Panel), Ireland
• Centro d’Iniziativa per l’Europa del Piemonte (& FRP Advisory Panel), Italy
• Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia
• The Seimas Ombudsmen's Office of the Republic of Lithuania
• Federación Red Acoge, Spain
• ENNHRI - European Network of National Human Rights Institutions
• FRA communication team
• FRA research team
• FRA FRP team

**Day 1**

Waltraud Heller, FRA Programme Manager civil society cooperation, welcomed the participants and presented the work of the Agency in the field of Communication and Outreach. She focused on FRA’s media and stakeholder communication work concerning report launches, key target audiences, and the way in which FRA cooperates and communicates with them. She gave examples of how FRA has previously cooperated with stakeholders, in particular NHRBs and civil society organisations, to communicate new FRA reports, and stressed the importance of working together towards the official launch of the upcoming report (on 2 June in Brussels) to maximize the communication impact. The importance of actively engaging key stakeholders in the early stages of FRA projects was also highlighted, so that the report’s results, opinions and recommendations can be communicated effectively with the support of FRA’s partners.

Following this presentation, the main authors of the report, Albin Dearing and Alice Hamilton, gave an overview of its main objectives, methodology and key findings. The participants were then invited to reflect on the following question in a quick *tour-de-table*.

**Why was it important for me to attend this meeting?**



The participants gave the following answers:

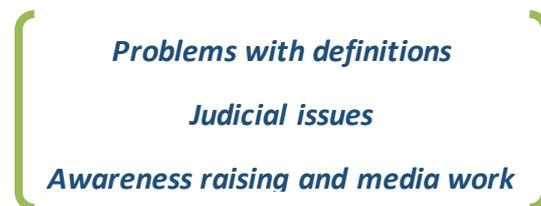
- An interest in the work of FRA and in hearing our ideas
- Previous work in social media, and the chance to learn how to multiply ideas
- To bridge the gap between FRA and our members
- Work-related interest in labour exploitation
- Learning and suggesting new ways of incorporating civil society in FRA
- Labour rights, access to justice, to know and help communicate this report
- To contribute to the communication of the report
- To dedicate the necessary time for the dissemination of the report
- The possibility to support the FRA communication strategy
- Sharing experiences and gathering ideas on how to communicate more efficiently
- See new ideas
- To learn more about the report and gain a greater understanding of these problems
- Because it's the biggest problem in my country in this moment
- Recognising the problem of SELEX
- Victim rights & labour rights, to increase awareness
- A growing interest in Austrian society. Need of more focus on the issue

## Key issues

Participants then discussed the main issues which arise when issues of labour exploitation are brought up in their countries.

*From your expertise and experience, what are the key issues and challenges in the area of labour exploitation?*

This question brought up many varied issues from one country to the next. The answers were then clustered around three main topics:



The answers included:

- BE: lack of awareness in general public of wide-spread issues, specific messages needed for policy makers;
- IT: how can the issue be communicated to those who are exploited but are not victims, and how can the complicity between consumers and businesses be broken?; public debate attention, legislation should be widened;
- SK: the media discourse needs to be changed → Slovakia needs to be seen not only as a sending but also receiving country;

- DK: there is current media attention relating to slavery and SELEX in DK; Momentum in society now on SELEX;
- Seasonal or contract workers. Use momentum of entering into summer?
- AT: awareness raising needed among consumers;
- LV: “normal” citizens can also face conditions of exploitation as migrants do;
- IE: awareness raising needed with public and policy makers, victim blaming needs to be avoided;
- exploitation in some EU countries is endemic;
- UK: the reality of the lives of slavery-type victims needs to be strongly communicated;
- EL: regarding the power of communications – only sensational stories make the news;
- ES: the situation of domestic workers should be highlighted; labour conditions in general are also difficult for entire population;
- UK: migrants coming from war-torn countries, everybody deserves the right to work;
- BG: the high rate of unemployment in BG; employment conditions are unfavourable and insecure; migration to western EU; ‘one day labour contracts’ being debated; Exploitation also taking place in BG. Of third country nationals (Georgia, Romania), but also of Bulgarians in BG.
- UK: in the report, make the distinction/ greater clarity between third country migrants and internal EU migrants;
- BG: the working conditions for women are very unfavourable;
- AT: trafficked women, a lack of protection of children and the age dimension; large exploitation in labour; Compensation for victims of trafficking; Counselling centre for undocumented workers; Referral mechanism for children – missing in AT; Cooperation between different actors. Mandate of labour inspectorate – not focusing on labour exploitation; Non criminalisation of victims
- UK: there are discrepancies in asylum polices and labour exploitation;
- ES: link between legal work and undocumented migrants; criminal law only applies for sexual exploitation/trafficking;
- LT: reporting in LT is very low, leads to no investigations;
- AT: access to justice;
- FI: the victims directive; awareness raising mandate; all findings of report can be used in FI;
- IE: the legal system acknowledges the trafficking but cannot give compensation; the importance of the victims directive; domestic work; trafficking from the far East and cracks in the legal framework; emerging trend of au pairs being exploited – no legislation; domestic work – diplomatic immunity. Code of practice DFA and foreign embassies; trafficking – trafficking for purpose of cannabis cultivation; complementarity – victims falling through the cracks – no criminalisation; Definition of trafficking too narrow; Victims



Directive – how to respond to SELEX, use momentum there as well – ALL victims of crime);  
Communication: getting people to understand the severity. Difficulty of perceptions of victimhood. And victim blaming; Restrictive migration policy adding to vulnerability.

- IT: civil society can be used find a window to talk to public authorities or at EU level;
- BE: labour inspectorates checking compliance with form on employers not employees; not enough attention on producers in agriculture;
- AT: missing cooperation between labour inspectorates and public/other actors (financial, etc.); compensation of victims of trafficking – women; counselling services for undocumented migrants;
- BG: safety at work is not guaranteed; ineffective public administration intervention; agriculture; state administration is reactive not proactive; potential country of exploitation of migrants as well as citizens; how the cost of labour encourages exploitation.

## Day 2

### 1. What concepts/ideas and target audience are still missing? (Following the discussions from Day 1)

The following **key concepts for communication** were identified by clustering the discussion cards from Day 1 and also the first round of discussions at the beginning of Day 2. The group also came up with many relevant actors and target audiences, which were identified according to the necessity and nature of the issues highlighted and geographical scope (national context, EU level).

<i>Changing the discourse</i>	<i>Closing gaps in the legal framework</i>	<i>Real stories / testimonies / non-victimisation</i>	<i>Awareness raising</i>	<i>Implementation / national and cross-national road map</i>	<i>Training</i>
Journalists	Policy makers (MS and EU level)	Journalists	Embassies/consulates	Labour inspectorates	migrants
Policy makers		Policy makers	municipalities	Specialized units	Trade unions
Sector's targets		Sector's targets	lawyers	External relations	judges
Embassies / consulates		Embassies / consulates	consumers	(Finance) police	Medical staff
		International media	migrants	EU permanent representations	Social workers
			(migrant) workers		police
			authorities		employers
			Medical staff		
			Specific journalists		
			Schools/universities		
			NGOs , grass-root organisations		
			Businesses		
			General public		
			Employment agencies, trade unions		
			EU permanent representatives		
			Ombudspersons, NHRI		

## 2. What tools, channels and materials should be used for communicating the report? & How can you help the FRA concretely in communicating the report?

- Social media (hashtag provided early on, used across languages);
- Remember the importance of having print copies of the report for social media-averse countries;
- Disseminating the project videos to local networks (more storytelling, less 'project' video, also with subtitles);
- Google ad-words;
- Facebook videos are auto-played on Facebook walls (embedded YouTube videos are not);
- Making National factsheets;
- Organisations could provide FRA with national media contacts;
- National public figures could be targeted and have them speak on worker's rights;
- Briefing the presidents of trade unions and organising interviews for them;
- Contacting Investigative journalists;
- Interviews;
- Briefing labour inspectorates and organize for them to be interviewed;
- Contacting traditional media, (key data, use testimonials);
- Posters;
- National info packs, collection of case studies, local media stories;
- Local radio;
- Getting in touch with local NGOs;
- Local experts, opinions;
- Targeting trusted journalists, International press;
- Developing own press release with link to FRA press release;
- Link countries;
- Collecting statements by former victims;
- Multipliers;
- Long-term dissemination;
- Utilize Brussels meeting of communicators of big players;
- Sharing within own network;
- Public transport information campaign?;
- Infographics;
- National events;
- Data base of specialized contacts;
- Write an opinion piece, an article;

### 3. What do you need from FRA to be able to do this?

- FRA should provide materials to disseminate (press release, media memo, all translated) well in advance of the launch;
- Hard copies of materials/report;
- Translated key messages and recommendations;
- Translated parts of report with country specific information;
- Summary of FRA opinions ahead of the report, to interpret and analyse them in national a policy context;
- Translated summary of report;
- A good report;
- Sharing report findings through regional offices;
- Keep messages clear and short, 1 page key messages in bullets;
- Early info from FRA always;
- Photographs of victim;
- Video with testimonies;
- Access to national research data



Afterwards, participants formed 3 working groups to discuss a number of issues relating to the launch in greater detail, namely;

- **the media outreach;**
- **developing a social media strategy, and;**
- **how the case studies could be put to best use in communicating about the report.**

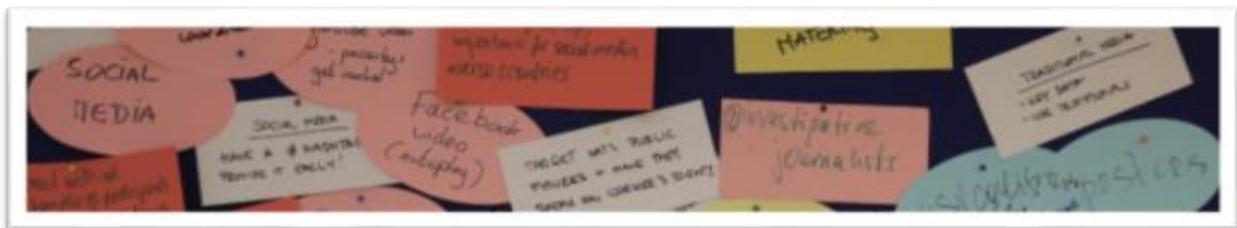
#### Media outreach

- Develop targeted media list including international, national media and Brussels correspondents
- Coordination with partners at the national level (for follow up in languages other than English)
- Outreach to pitch launch event (coordination with Council), targeting Brussels-based media
- Outreach concerning report launch
- “general media”
- “specialized media” at national level



## How can we use case studies to communicate about the report?

- The report contains over 200 concrete case studies highlighting risk factors for severe labour exploitation.
- Although there are no first person accounts from 'victims' / 'survivors', it may be possible to re-write some of these stories from a more human angle in order to attract more attention and raise awareness.
- If available, the whole timeline or history of a person's case could be presented – maybe reinforcing the message that anybody could fall victim to severe labour exploitation.
- People sympathise more with individual stories than generalised examples and statistics. The stories need to be gripping and emotive.
- The general narrative could be built around the fact that everybody should have access to economic and social rights.
- Another option is to identify stereotypes and then systematically dismantle them with clear examples.
- It would be good to present a case with quotes from all sides involved: police, victim, employer, labour inspector etc. A multi-layered story could be presented.
- FRA could use contacts of local NGOs working with victims in order to obtain first-person quotes and photographs.
- Policy opinions/recommendations need to be directed at policy-makers, but at the same time raising public awareness through the media will put more pressure on those very same decision-makers.
- We must embrace the fact that policy advocacy and media communications for the report will necessarily be very different.
- Overall, a communications plan should be incorporated into a project from the very beginning. During the research, communication materials like photos and quotes can be collected and edited for later use. Video footage from all of the national field-research could be gathered.



## Social media campaign

Pre-launch (10<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June)

### Objectives:

- Explain what severe labour exploitation is
- Describe the project and what it involved
- Promote the launch event
- Provoke interest of key stakeholders

### Hashtag:

#selex2015

### Key tweets:

27<sup>th</sup> May 10am

Upcoming report on severe [#LabourExploitation](#) 1st to explore all criminal forms of labour exploitation <http://bit.ly/FRA-Selex> [#selex2015](#)

1st June 10am

Tmrw severe [#LabourExploitation](#) in [#EU](#) research findings to be published [@EU\\_Council](#) event. Live stream: <http://bit.ly/selex-live> [#selex2015](#)

### Key Facebook posts:

26th May 10am

Next week FRA will launch a report on severe labour exploitation in the EU. Research is first of its kind to explore all criminal forms of labour exploitation in the EU. During research over 600 interviews with experts were carried out - police, judges, labour inspectors etc. - in 21 EU MS. Aim of project was to identify factors which put workers at risk and aid MSs to take action. <http://bit.ly/FRA-Selex>

1st June 10am

Human dignity of all workers needs respecting: hope of making a living away from home must not lead to labour exploitation. Watch live presentation of FRA research on severe labour exploitation in EU tomorrow at 9am CET. <http://bit.ly/selex-live> and follow on twitter [#selex2015](#)

**Videos & material from partners:** ongoing

**Data & media stories national level:** ongoing

## Launch day (2<sup>nd</sup> June)

**Key messages:** ongoing

Storify? Check with EU Council

Press release title tweeted in all languages

Infographic

Videos

Press releases from partner organisations

Media articles

## Post launch (3<sup>rd</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June)

Targeted national outreach

List different activities on website

Contact policy makers via Twitter. What happens next?

At the request of the participants a time slot in the afternoon was allocated to discuss the follow up in the months after the report launch. Again, participants were invited to propose relevant themes of their choice. The following issues were discussed:

- **the role of governments and parliaments;**
- **Non-specific laws and regulations;**
- **the Victims' Directive angle;**
- **Labour exploitation definitions;**



## Role of governments and parliaments

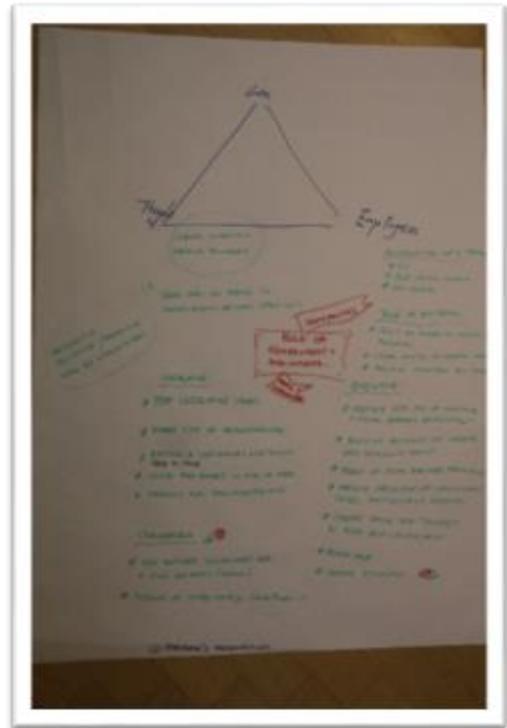
- Triangle between governments, trade unions and employees
- Send info on report to human rights network within the governments
- Encourage pro-active preventive work by labour inspectorates

### Legislative:

- Map legislative issues, make list of responsibilities, meetings of legislators with victims, invite FRA expert in case of need
- Hearing for parliamentarians
- Challenges: gap between government representatives + civil servants, timing of intervention (elections, etc.)
- Alternative international press: ILO, CoE social charter, UN-CESCR
- Role at EU-level: government as a player to create pressure, other governments to create pressure, propose changes to relevant EU Directives

### Executive:

- meeting with Ministry of Justice, Social Affairs, employment
- build on existing or create new working group
- build on social partner triangle
- Service provision at municipal level, particularly medical;
- create space for victims to form self-advocacy
- flash-mob
- create empathy



## Non-specific laws and regulations

(Laws and regulations that target not specifically the issue of labour exploitation, but could have side effects)

- Employment and welfare laws are very important with regards to the environments where the workers come from – including of course EU MS.
- Influencing businesses and consumers would be a useful angle.
- The discourse is divided into two separate worlds – the world of business (financial profits) and the world of human rights. Though there are intertwined, even in the EU policy they seem to be separate spheres.
- FRA (and the EU) need to think of how to communicate the message to business – and more importantly how can businesses themselves communicate the message. The question is what is in for them – use the angle of equal competition (business that 'play by the rules' lose out to businesses which exploit labour forces).

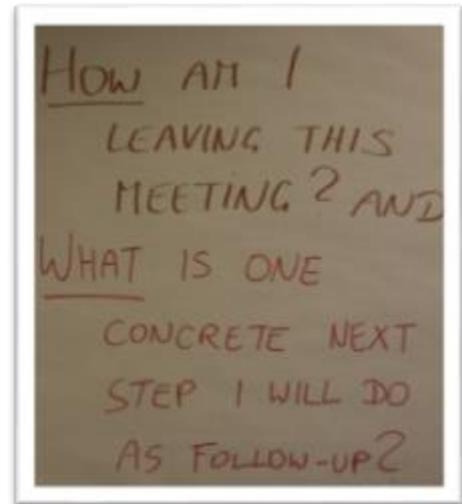
- In order to speak to the businesses though, we need to use their (corporate) language. FRA could connect with “Business Europe” who deal with corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- Another angle would be to influence consumers, there have been some very good campaigns (NIKE).
- FRA could organise a working group, since this is an area which requires practitioners and experts from different fields (business, consumers, trade unions, prosecution).

### The Victims’ Directive angle

- Use the definition of “victims” in the Victims Directive. The definition of victim in the directive (Art 2) is broad, but says nothing explicitly about victims of trafficking and of exploitation.
- Use the data of the report to support work on victims’ rights, going beyond just labour exploitation cases
- Use good practices in other Member States. Start a database of promising practices in all countries which should be regularly updated as new practices are created, or new Member States adopt them. The figures for countries using such practices could be used in media and twitter campaigns etc. The database should be available for all interested parties.
- Use the SELEX report to ensure that the Directive is interpreted broadly
- Access to legal aid in the Victims’ Directive should be applied to SELEX cases
- Use report to expand the remit of labour inspectorates and to produce guidelines on what to look for in terms of labour exploitation
- Collect data on access to justice for victims at national level, pinpointing areas where this is weak so that resources can be directed here
- List of country-specific benefits on why countries should address issues of SELEX to encourage positive action
- Address disparities among Member States in the interpretation/definition of crimes as incorporated in the Directive (can cause confusion in rights of victims and power to sanction exploitative employers)
- Review on improvements of Victims’ Directive one year after the SELEX report or the deadline for transposition
- These action plans should be aimed at considering the worker as a worker, not an undocumented migrant → change the discourse, challenge perceptions of public and policymakers

## Conclusions and next steps

In the closing round, participants were invited to reflect upon their overall impressions of the report and meeting. They were also asked to think about one concrete step each would take as a follow-up activity. Finally, Waltraud Heller thanked everyone and expressed gratitude for the committed, dedicated and rich work that had been undertaken during the two days. She particularly stressed the importance of engaging important FRA stakeholders in the Agency's projects early on, in order to achieve greater impact through high-quality results and shared ownership, but also via effective and consistent joint communication strategies and outreach techniques.



### The concrete 'next steps' participants committed to delivering:

- Discuss with others in my organisation the outcome of the meeting, stop the victimisation and concentrate on rights
- Bring input received into the communication strategy
- Send my media contacts to Blanca of FRA (Germany and Ireland)
- Contact NGOs about the communication of the SELEX report
- Get in touch with you for help with national media contacts
- Share information and inspiration with my colleagues
- Contact NGOs working in this area and have info on real issues
- Help provide Danish (DK) contacts
- Send EU and national contacts to Blanca (Bulgaria)
- Post videos from Payoke on my FB page
- Work on the meeting report
- Compile contacts, create additional # (hashtags) for social media campaign
- Gather all your inputs from the meeting into big tables
- Share report with my colleagues and explore what can be done in Austria
- Think about how to translate SELEX report findings into national policy structure (Ireland)
- Analyse the meeting inputs

\*Photo credit: FRA / Monica Pascanu and Michael Wilkinson

For further information please contact: [frp@fra.europa.eu](mailto:frp@fra.europa.eu)