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Digitalisation of Trafficking in Human Beings - KOK study identifies major Challenges for Law Enforcement and Specialised Counselling Centres

The study *Trafficking in Human Beings 2.0* examines the influence of the internet and social media on trafficking in Germany and shows the serious impact of technological developments on the fight against trafficking in human beings and the support of trafficked persons.

Berlin, 7 February 2023 - The study *Trafficking in Human Beings 2.0 - Digitalisation of Trafficking in Human Beings in Germany: Developments and Courses of Action* by the German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings – KOK highlights the increasing role of communication and information technologies in trafficking. This poses major challenges for law enforcement and for the protection and support of trafficked persons.

Challenges of technology-based trafficking in human beings

Perpetrators are increasingly using communication and information technologies to recruit, control and also threaten trafficked persons, thus expanding their scope of action and supplementing previous methods of trafficking in human beings. With the help of digital means, such as messenger services or tracking apps, they can also monitor trafficked persons remotely and exercise pressure upon them. Politics, law enforcement and the support system are still in an early stage of responding to these challenges.

“In order to be able to respond to these developments in counselling as well, and to ensure prevention and victim protection for those affected, there needs to be professionalisation in the area of IT security as well as technical and human resources,” explains Margarete Mureşan, KOK board member and head of the specialised counselling centre IN VIA Berlin-Brandenburg. “Awareness of digital violence and technological skills must be built up and expanded in order to ensure digital preservation of evidence and IT security for investigative procedures and protection against violence for those affected”, adds Sophia Wirsching, KOK executive director.

Backlog demand for technical and digital skills

There is a need for political and practical adjustments to close the protection gaps for persons affected by technology-based trafficking in human beings. The study presents possible solutions and concrete recommendations for policy-makers, law enforcement and specialised counselling centres.

The German NGO Network against Trafficking in Human Beings – KOK comprises 43 specialised counselling centres and organisations that advocate for trafficked persons and migrant women affected by violence.

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