

The role and challenges of civil society in the counter trafficking effort

NGO 's within society have a very crucial role in counterbalancing the State' s actions or inaction in combating trafficking and supporting victims of trafficking. Working between the state and the society NGO 's fill the gaps in existing state policies and programs and may play a very important role in assisting antitrafficking task forces in preventing trafficking, protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers.

In Cyprus, under very difficult circumstances NGO 's have played an important role in the field of Trafficking.

Acting as a watchdog, being critical to governmental policies and practices, checking the impacts of measures taken to combat and prevent trafficking, assisting victims, getting involved in the process of identifying victims are only some of the activities of the NGO's in the complex antitrafficking field. I would like to mention the contribution of NGO's in the process of development and implementation of international legislation and national practices.

Yesterday, the Ombudsman, acting as the Independent Authority for Human Rights, submitted an overall report on the framework for combating and preventing trafficking of human beings in Cyprus. Within the Report, we recognized and emphasized the important role of NGOs in the successful implementation of the framework and we stressed the necessity of upgrading and reinforcing their involvement, especially in preventive actions and assistance of victims.