



U.S. Rep. Smith's plan to attack human trafficking from the air takes off

Ukraine first in Europe to train airport employees to identify potential victims of trafficking

KYIV, 10 June 2013—Ukraine's aviation sector today became the first civil employees in Europe to receive training to identify potential victims of human trafficking as part of a plan to increase global co-operation in the fight against modern day slavery.

The workshop is part of an international plan being promoted by U.S. Congressman Chris Smith, who is in Kyiv this week introducing a measure to increase partnerships between law enforcement and the travel industry to better combat human trafficking.

"We are all responsible for ending this dehumanizing crime, but the fact is airline, hotel and transportation professionals are in a unique position to identify potential victims to get them help they need," said **Chris Smith**, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues. The Congressman is in Kyiv to speak at the high-level conference on trafficking organized by the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure hosted the workshop Monday, which was led by the humanitarian organization Airline Ambassadors and included about 30 individuals from Ukraine's Aviation Administration, the Ministry of Social Policy, Interpol and government legal experts. Participants learned about how to identify potential victims of trafficking and the best way to alert law enforcement to suspicious situations while respecting civil liberties and minimizing transportation disruptions.

Smith introduced Monday his resolution on Trafficking Victim Watchfulness, which urges other countries to establish similar training regimes in collaboration with the travel industry to prevent trafficking and facilitate law enforcement intervention to get victims needed care.

"I commend Ukraine for the work it has done today to focus attention on the 600,000 to 800,000 trafficking victims who are moved across borders each year and who could be rescued in transit if airline and other transportation personnel were appropriately trained and law enforcement ready to intervene," Smith said. "I have no doubt that, as a result of this training today, hundreds, maybe thousands, more lives will be saved."

Parliamentarians will vote on the resolution at the OSCE PA Annual Session in Istanbul starting 29 June. The resolution draws on guidelines established by the Global Business Coalition Against Trafficking and NGOs, including Airline Ambassadors, who have developed training programs to help airline workers identify potential trafficking victims.

"Flight crews and travel industry personnel are a front line of defense in combatting the most horrific human rights issue of our century," said Airline Ambassadors President Nancy Rivard. "The singular action of training employees can prevent tens and thousands of human trafficking cases."

"The resolution of global anti-trafficking trailblazer Chris Smith, and others in government, champions the rights of trafficking victims so they are not treated as criminal, deportable or disposable-- something businesses and NGOs are crucial to help government do," said Robert Rigby-Hall, Co-Chair of the global Business Coalition Against Trafficking.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is comprised of 323 parliamentarians from 57 countries spanning, Europe, Central Asia and North America. The Assembly provides a forum for parliamentary diplomacy, monitors elections, and strengthens international co-operation to uphold commitments on political, security, economic, environmental and human rights issues.

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Link to the story on EuroNews about the initiative in Ukraine
<http://ua.euronews.com/2013/06/10/ukraine-human-trafficking/>