



# **Upholding Rights: Early Legal Intervention THE EZINE!**

## Ezine #3

Welcome to the latest EZINE for the Early Legal Intervention project. Here you can follow the project's progress, check out our activities so far and find out what to expect in the coming months.

Make sure to check our website for more updates!  
[www.earlylegalintervention.eu](http://www.earlylegalintervention.eu)

# What is the Early Legal Intervention Project?



**Upholding Rights! Early Legal Intervention for Victims of Trafficking** aims to establish best practice in securing the protection of victims of trafficking (VoT) through early legal intervention, thus enhancing their social recovery and their role as witnesses. The project builds on the existing international consensus that the fight against trafficking must include a rights-based approach to protection of the victims. The EU has strengthened this position by adopting priorities and objectives that clearly outline the legal rights of VoT, and support the prompt collaboration between the State and civil society in upholding these rights. The ELI Partners are: Immigrant Council of Ireland (Lead Partner), LSA Glasgow, AIRE London, BGRF Bulgaria, KSPSC Lithuania and Centre for Women War Victims, Croatia.

An essential component in securing the human rights and dignity of VoT is the provision of understandable correct information on the legal and administrative options available. The concept of Early Legal Intervention (ELI) incorporates the provision of confidential advocacy at the first encounter between victims and authorities, risk assessment of immediate protection needs, decision on the best/most appropriate route for protection by State, ensuring recovery and reflection (R&R) prior to interviews, assessing criminalisation risks e.g. immigration offences, alternative protection route in case the exploitation is not part of a human trafficking crime, in the full legal term.

## Who are we?



**The Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI)** is an organisation where migrant and Irish people work together to provide information, support and legal advice to immigrants and their families. The ICI is very active in lobbying for legislative and policy reforms and has contributed to some very significant reforms, as well as to attitudinal change and improved understanding of issues facing migrants in Ireland.



**Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation** works since its inception in 1998 on research, awareness raising, education, monitoring and proposing legislation and policy in the field of gender equality and protection of women against violence in all its forms – domestic violence, trafficking in women, sexual harassment at the workplace, etc.



**Legal Services Agency (LSA)** is Scotland's largest law centre tackling the unmet legal needs of those in disadvantage. It does so through the provision of legal advice, representation in courts/tribunals, research, publications, seminars and education. LSA undertakes work in protecting the rights of refugee and migrant women and children, preventing homelessness, defended eviction and mortgage repossession, mental health, dementia and social welfare law.



**AIRE Centre, England** is a UK-based charity whose mission is to promote awareness of European law rights and assist marginalised individuals and those in vulnerable circumstances to assert those rights. Our work involves providing advice to individuals and legal advisers with regards to EU free movement law and the application of the European Convention of Human Rights. We also provide training to legal advisers and key stakeholders so as to increase awareness of using European Law to assist marginalised individuals.



**Klaipeda Social and Psychological Services Centre, Lithuania's** vision is to have women, children, and families socially and psychologically safe in a spiritually harmonious society. We work in cooperation with National and international NGO's, along with the Department of Social Support at Klaipeda Municipality.



**Centre for Women War Victims, Croatia** (CWWV) is a non-governmental, feminist organization, founded in 1992 with the aim of supporting women in opposing war violence against women. As one of the oldest women's organizations in Croatia, the work was always devoted to sensitizing the public and promoting women's rights through direct aid to women, sharing knowledge and experience, networking with women's organizations and lobbying to influence state institutions and legislation in favour of women.

## What have we accomplished recently?

### Translation of the Comparative Report and Summary Report



The Comparative Report and Summary Comparative Report have been translated. An online version was designed in Bulgarian,

Finnish and Lithuanian. These reports are available on the website [www.earlylegalintervention.eu](http://www.earlylegalintervention.eu)

The translation of the summary report will allow for greater dissemination in the respective countries.

## Pilot Projects

The pilot projects for the Early Legal Information project are well underway in Bulgaria, Croatia and Ireland.



The Immigrant Council of Ireland designed templates which all three countries have used and completed regarding their clients. The template was designed based on the best practice model developed by the Legal Services Agency in Scotland and the concept note for the pilot projects. The template tries to ensure that a human rights approach is embedded within each of the pilot projects. The pilot projects will soon be completed and the completed templates will assist document the lessons learnt from the pilot project.

## Recent Meetings

### Bulgarian National Advisory Committee meeting



The first NAC meeting in Bulgaria was held on the 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2015. The concept of ELI was discussed and clarified as well as the strategy to follow in Sofia and the rest of the country. Members of the NAC who met were from the BGRF and the Alliance for Protection against Gender-Based Violence from Burgas, Russe, Pernik, Varna, Haskovo and Dimitrovgrad, Pleven. Legal practitioners working on concrete cases of the ELI pilot attended as well as representatives from the Bulgarian police and representative of the Bulgarian Platform of the European Women's Lobby.



## Partner Meeting in Zagreb

The centre for war victims Croatia-ROSA hosted the partners for two days of meetings in Zagreb on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of April. Day one included media and communications training from media expert Jerry O Connor of the Immigrant Council of Ireland. The training was informative and enjoyable.

The pilot project countries enjoyed the expertise of Denise Charlton, the Irish expert nominated to the EC Expert Group on Trafficking in Human Beings and Esohe Aghatise of Equality Now, CATW International and Ass Iroko Onlus for an International Advisory Board meeting to discuss the on-going pilot projects.



A roundtable with the Croatian stakeholders was a great learning experience for all the partners to understand the systems in place in Croatia for victims of trafficking, both the strengths and weaknesses.

# Upcoming

## International Partner Meeting – Bulgaria



On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of October the partners of the Early Legal Information Project will meet in Sofia, Bulgaria. This will be the fourth partner meeting for the project, and the focus will be on training and dissemination.

Matt Moriarty of the AIRE Centre, UK will deliver a training toolkit and train the ELI partners. The aim is that all the ELI partners can then train multidisciplinary groups in their respective countries on the necessity and advantage of early legal intervention for victims of trafficking. The training will include case studies drawn from the pilot project to illustrate the merits of ELI.

The meeting will also allow for a national roundtable with Bulgarian stakeholders, a project update session, an International Advisory Committee meeting, a meeting on the findings of the pilot project and a brainstorming session for the final three months of the project, the Brussels briefing, the International conference, reporting requirements and other issues.

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