

Ireland

- In 2016, ninety-five victims of human trafficking were identified in Ireland, a significant increase on the previous year. Fifty-two were victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, thirty-eight were victims of trafficking for labour exploitation and four were victims of trafficking for forced criminality. One person was identified as a victim for both sexual and labour exploitation. All of these victims were given the option of availing of the services and supports as provided in the Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland. In addition, the NGO community were very active in providing supports to many victims.
- As part of the Santa Marta Group and the North Atlantic Maritime Project, two 'Action Days' were coordinated with the Workplace Relations Commission Inspectorate, Revenue Service, The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, The Irish Navy, The Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána in October 2016. Operation Eggshell targeted over 40 vessels at various fishing ports around Ireland. While no evidence of human trafficking was found on the days, a number of breaches of Employment Permit legislation was uncovered.
- Relationship between the Church and An Garda Síochána continues to be strong. The stakeholder group formed under the umbrella of Santa Marta Group comprising of Church, An Garda Síochána, Police Service Northern Ireland, State Agencies and Civil Society met on 20 June 2017. This group was co-chaired by Assistant Commissioner John O Driscoll and Bishop Brennan. The Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin addressed the meeting
- The Workplace Relations Commission provided an update to the Stakeholders Meeting in June 2017 which included the following; they carry out over 5,000 inspections of the fishing industry per year; Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with the Health and Safety Body; Training and awareness raising has been carried out among employees and risk profiling of vessels has been conducted; Powers in relation to the right to work are addressed through the Atypical Working Scheme; A contact Centre has been established to deal with queries regarding the Atypical Scheme.
- The Fishermen's Organizations and the International Transport Federation are key stakeholders in the North Atlantic Maritime Project and were represented at the meeting in June 2017
- Mr. Michael Duthie, Deputy Director of the Santa Marta Group, was in attendance at this meeting and provided an update on the Global Project.
- An Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice and Equality have received funding for the planned research project in conjunction with the Mary Immaculate College, Limerick who is leading this initiative; A meeting is scheduled in December 2017 to progress this. The project is aimed at identifying high quality data sets that exist in Ireland on Human Trafficking; enhance existing information; collaborate with NGO's; analyse Human Trafficking and Slavery information data; hold workshops to disseminate awareness raising information to bodies such as schools and institutions; and to deliver a report and handbook.

- An Garda Síochána have planned to establish Divisional Protective Service Units within the 28 Garda Divisions nationwide which replicate the services offered by the National Protective Services Bureau National Unit. Four of these are up and running in 2017. This places the victims in the heart of the national response. An Garda Síochána is conscious that the information that is given to these vulnerable victims is the correct and most appropriate for them. Under the National Referral Mechanism, all victims of human trafficking are provided with the support of the State and Non-Governmental Agencies.
- The Human Trafficking Investigation & Co-Ordination Unit is working closely with the International Transport Federation (ITF) and a solicitors office in Dublin in the identification of victims of human trafficking in the fishing industry.
- There is a substantial increase in the number of victims that have been identified in Ireland in the fishing industry in 2017.
- An Garda Síochána in conjunction with the International Organisation for Migration has already developed an internationally recognised training course titled, “Tackling Trafficking in Human Beings; Prevention, Protection, Prosecution & Partnership”. As part of the Santa Marta Project and the North Atlantic Maritime Project, this training continues to be delivered to members within An Garda Síochána based at ports throughout the country. Specific awareness raising training is currently being devised for members of An Garda Síochána who work at Dublin Port and this is scheduled for December 2017.
- Ireland has again been recognised in 2017 as a Tier 1 Nation in the US State Department’s Trafficking in Persons Report. Our participation in the Santa Marta Group formed part of Ireland’s submission to the US State Department.
- An Garda Síochána are part of a multi-annual strategic plan, EMPACT (European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats) project led by Europol. In 2017 Ireland participated in three weeks of action under the priority crime area Trafficking in Human Beings. An Garda Síochána place particular emphasis on using a multi-agency approach during these action weeks. The first week scheduled in May 2017 focused on labour exploitation, the second week in June 2017 focused on sexual exploitation and the third week scheduled in October 2017 focused on child exploitation.
 - In May 2017, a joint operation was carried out with emphasis on labour exploitation, An Garda Síochána, the Workplace Relations Commission, the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social Protection Inspectors were part of the teams targeting intelligence led operations focusing on the nail bar industry.
 - In June 2017, a joint operation was carried out on sexual exploitation. Operations and actions nationwide were carried out. The Garda National Immigration Bureau, The Human Trafficking Investigation & Co-Ordination Unit, The Garda National Protective Services Bureau and the Border Management Unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service were involved in the various actions.
 - In October 2017, a joint operation was carried out on child exploitation. The Human Trafficking Investigation Unit and the Garda National Immigration Bureau worked jointly with the Border Management Unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service along with members of the

Divisional Protective Service Units nationwide. The focus was on the safeguarding of children and young people, focusing on unaccompanied or children accompanied in suspicious circumstances, but looking at all forms of child trafficking. Dublin Ferry Port and Dublin Airport were focused on in relation to a high visibility, education, awareness and prevention operations.

- Operational and prevention activity in relation to Organised Crime Groups was undertaken to disrupt criminal activities in all weeks of action. A number of investigations have been initiated as a result, both at a national and international level. A number of victims of human trafficking were identified and the National Referral Mechanism process (NREM) was implemented in each case.
- In June 2017, Irish Department of Justice and Equality co-hosted the 3rd cross border forum for law enforcement, statutory agencies and NGOs, with the focus markedly different to previous because it was more outward facing and particularly aimed at engaging with private sector representatives, employers and recruitment agencies, as well as some of the inspectorates (particularly in agri-foods sectors).
- Interpol Task Force on Human Trafficking (ITHT): Ireland continues to be a member of and contribute to the Interpol Task Force on Human Trafficking. This is an international working group for law enforcement specialists dedicated to preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings at a global level. A member of the Human Trafficking Investigation & Co-Ordination Unit advises regularly on this group and will attend the 5th Global Interpol Conference in Qatar in December 2017.
- A representative from the Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-Ordination Unit sits on the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) Human Trafficking Sub-Group which meets in Belfast on a quarterly basis. This group involves consultation between representatives from the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland Administrations. During the course of 2016 a Cross Border Task Force was established on the island of Ireland. Six (6) crime priorities were identified and human trafficking is one of these. As a result of this task force An Garda Síochána are co-operating with the Police Service of Northern Ireland in a number of investigations into human trafficking and organised prostitution. A number of organised crime gangs involving Romanian Criminals have been identified as working on both sides of the border and are being targeted under this initiative.
- An Garda Síochána work closely with the Police Service Northern Ireland in relation to joint training and investigations. There is continued co-operation under the Joint Agency Task Force.
- Currently An Garda Síochána has prosecutions before the courts in relation to human trafficking for sexual exploitation (prostitution) and human trafficking for labour exploitation (car washes and waste disposal) industry.
- As part of An Garda Síochána's continued awareness raising, the Human Trafficking Investigation & Co-Ordination Unit took part in 'The Garda Marquee' at the 'Tullamore Agricultural Show' (60,000+ participants) in August 2017 and the 'National Ploughing Championships' (280,000+) in September 2017 along with the Garda Bureau of Community Engagement, the Garda Reserve, and the local Garda

Victim Service Office. The aim of this is to raise awareness of human trafficking and labour exploitation in the agricultural industry in Ireland.

- The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 came into law in 2017. Part V of this act makes it an offence for somebody to purchase sexual services from another person.
- The Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017 came into law in 2017. This puts on a legislative basis the provision of information to, protection and support for victims of crime including victims of human trafficking.

At the invitation of Fr. Bruno Ciceri, Vatican delegate for the Apostleship of the Sea, official of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development - Bishop Brennan - in his capacity as Bishop Promoter in Ireland for the Apostleship of the Sea and as a member of the Santa Marta group founded by Pope Francis - attended the Apostleship of the Sea Conference in Taiwan in October.

This 24th World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea, whose theme was "Caught in the net", was held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan from 1 to 7 October 2017, and dedicated to themes relating to fishing and human trafficking - those within the industry who for whatever reason, find themselves entangled in nets in which they experience difficulties and need rescuing.

Specific time was allotted to the issue of human trafficking and areas of abuse. The input here was given by Michael Duthie of the Santa Marta Group.

Preaching at Mass in the Cathedral in Kaohsiung on Sunday 1st October, Bishop Brennan said - 'What we cease to celebrate, we soon cease to cherish... as we gather here for the International Conference of the Apostleship of The Sea in Kaohsiung, we gather to celebrate all who work in the ministry of chaplaincy and those they care for, most especially those in imprisoned in 'the invisible chains' of human trafficking, very accurately now described as 'modern slavery!'

On his return to Ireland, Bishop Brennan gave interviews to three newspapers and a radio interview in the south east.