

## New forms of slavery: Vatican hosts an international conference with police forces

Trafficking in human beings is the focus of the two-day conference to be held on 9-10 April 2014 at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in the Vatican City.

Police Chiefs of 22 countries are attending the event along with Europol and Interpol representatives.

Police Chief Alessandro Pansa is present for Italy, together with the police top brass from the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Albania, Lithuania, Ireland, Ulster, Scotland, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, India, Thailand, Nigeria, Ghana and Australia.

In his speech the Police Chief said that "trafficking in human beings is an unacceptable crime against personal dignity, a serious threat to the security of our nations and an issue of global reach concerning human rights. There are many forms of trafficking, but one consistent aspect is the criminal abuse of the vulnerability of the victims.

An organized network is used to transport them to the destination country, where migrants are often held in conditions of coercion and required to carry out a variety of jobs, while many women and children are held in constant fear and forced into sexual slavery. As an intolerable violation of fundamental rights, trafficking in human beings is explicitly prohibited by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union".

"The E.U. has made combating this phenomenon one of the priorities of the Stockholm Program and European Police agencies, in close cooperation with their international partners, are taking action to dismantle the criminal organizations that run the business of human trafficking, gaining huge illegal profits. According to a 2011 European Union directive, Member States are also requested to prevent human trafficking through awareness-raising campaigns, and to provide specific training for the officers likely to come into contact with the victims of the trade. Strengthening police and judicial cooperation is the key to fight this widespread form of transnational crime and to bring to court the culprits".

The Church with its humanitarian work and the law enforcement organizations will join forces in tackling human trafficking.

At the end of the conference Pope Francis is expected to deliver a closing address to participants.

Italian

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