

# European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

## Annex I

Approved by the EUCPN Management Board in 2018

Please complete the template in English in compliance with the ECPA criteria contained in the Rules and procedures for awarding and presenting the European Crime Prevention Award (Par.2 §3).

### General information

1. Please specify your country.

Germany

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

THB LIBERI – Fighting THB and exploitation against children and young persons in Germany and Europe

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), SO41, THB Analysis unit

Contact details:

Franziska Kramer, so41-liberi@bka.bund.de

Gustav Teschner, so41-liberi@bka.bund.de

5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

01/07/2018, still running

6. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

Articles about the project in the police magazine Die POLIZEI [German; attached]

Documents from German Presidency Conference THB LIBERI / GRETA  
[English; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/german-presidency-conference>]

Loverboy video [original in German  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P75SwvN5TWU>, English version  
available <https://youtu.be/JlSkgl2HKrs>]

7. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

The THB LIBERI project, running from 2018-2022, is funded by the Internal Security Fund (ISF) of the European Union. It is led by the German Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA SO41) and involves seven German police departments, as well as the Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office.

Liberi is Latin for "children". The goal of THB LIBERI is to fight trafficking and exploitation of the very vulnerable group of children and young people (up to the age of 21) through a multidisciplinary innovative approach, combining knowledge from different sectors in order to raise awareness of the characteristics of child trafficking and promote a common approach to preventing and combating it. To reach this goal, the THB LIBERI project is very operational and aims at reaching out to those affected and endangered by THB crimes and at tackling the wide criminal structures behind it. The project covers three main topics:

**1. Exploitation of children and young persons through the Internet**

The Internet offers a world of opportunity and challenges, not only to children, but also to traffickers. This topic covers the recruitment of young victims through the Internet, how they are advertised and used to lure clients through escort websites. It also covers the role of the Darknet in relation to the sexual exploitation of children, the needs and opportunities coming to light during investigative procedures, and how best to tap into online prevention to keep children and young people safe as this vulnerable group is very active and present in the Internet. The project establishes innovative methods for Internet investigations for the daily work of police units and corresponding preventive campaigns.

**2. Exploitation of children and young persons by family structures**

Many children are trafficked by members of their families or communities. Besides trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes, the project covers exploitation through forced begging and committing criminal offences. Especially for the latter prevention methods were developed to raise awareness for the isolated victims. Very recently a new prevention campaign was set up in Berlin to prevent male adolescents from ethnical minorities from illegal prostitution and sexual abuse (attached).

**3. Strengthening child and young persons' testimonies**

One of the main challenges in investigating human trafficking offenses is the collection of testimonial evidence from victims. In many countries, an investigative procedure is dependent on the victims' willingness to come forward and/or testify and a trafficking victim's statement is a necessary proof of evidence. The project aims at enhancing the knowledge and capacity of relevant professionals (investigators, prosecutors, the judiciary) to deal with child trafficking cases, using a multi-disciplinary approach. At the same time, efforts are being made to put the victim and its needs in the centre of investigations to establish a safe environment.

**I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.**

8. Which **crime prevention/ reduction mechanisms** were used in this project to contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Multiple answers are possible.

**Establishing and maintaining normative barriers to committing criminal acts**

e.g. 'Offenders, we are watching you' campaigns

**Reducing recruitment** to criminal social environments and activities by eliminating or reducing the social and individual causes and processes that lead to criminality

e.g. social and financial support for disadvantaged families

**Deterring** potential perpetrators from committing crimes through the threat of punishment

e.g. decreasing the time between arrest and punishment

**Disrupting** criminal acts by stopping them before they are carried out

e.g. increasing police patrols in vulnerable areas

**Protecting vulnerable targets** by reducing opportunities and make it more demanding to carry out criminal acts

e.g. placing locks and cameras

**Reducing the harmful consequences** of criminal acts

e.g. initiatives to recover stolen goods

**Reducing the rewards** from criminal acts

e.g. restorative justice programmes

**Incapacitating** (or neutralising) perpetrators by denying them the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts

e.g. imprisonment of key gang members

**Encouraging** desistance from crime and rehabilitating former offenders so they are able to settle back into a normal life

e.g. prison rehabilitation programs

Explain how this/these crime prevention mechanisms were used ((**Max. 300 words**))

Most of the victims of THB and exploitation are no longer working in brothels or clubs but in apartments and hotels. The circumstances offer anonymity, less rules and regulations and more income for the traffickers. In project THB LIBERI a guideline was developed focusing on 'fake client actions'. This guideline includes legal limits, practice examples and know-how for the police agents trying to get in contact with prostitutes working in apartments and hotels.

To counter the dynamic shift of prostitution offers to the digital area THB LIBERI tested and provided licenses for an innovative tool for automatic researches on

Adult Service Websites to increase the efficiency of the police officers dealing with the phenomenon. By doing this it was possible to provide more than 60 police units in Austria and Germany with an access and also support other European countries.

The project THB LIBERI started a social media campaign showing the development of a Loverboy relationship in an Instagram chat. This method was used to show the simplicity of 'Loverboys' to recruit their victims. The persons who should see this are mainly to be found in social networks, therefore it was published on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

THB LIBERI supports on a daily basis dozens of investigations against OCGs operating in Europe. As THB investigations are expensive and complex, the project enables measures with financial and technical support. Due to that it is possible to look underneath the surface and get a hold on the in-depth criminals organizing the networks.

THB LIBERI project partner Berlin developed a prevention project in a designated area as it is broadly known for minor male sexual exploitation to raise awareness amongst the civil society. The development was made with support of and funded by THB LIBERI.

**II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives.** For more information on evaluation, click [here](#)

9. What were the reasons for setting up the project? Was this context analysed before the project was initiated and in what way (How, and by whom? Which data were used?)? In what way did this analysis inform the set-up of the project? (**Max. 150 words**)

THB is no new crime. But the most vulnerable group of victims, persons under the age of 21 – sometimes part of highly closed (family) communities -, do need specified measures and trained persons to help them. The project THB LIBERI was set up to gather knowledge on pending issues, to respond to emerging trends fast, to connect relevant key players with each other and to support actions taken against groups of perpetrators. In addition, the project explicitly focuses not only on sexual exploitation but all subtypes of THB such as begging and committing criminal offenses as the knowledge in this area was not sufficient when the project started. At last, the victims of THB generally do not receive much attention or support by society. The project aims to place necessary adaptations on the agenda of policy makers.

10. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

The project THB LIBERI follows a catalogue of objectives which were defined together with the partners and confirmed by the EU. The objectives contain e.g. the financial support of investigations, analytical reports, preventive methods, preventive concepts, networking events and a specific amount of dismantled OCGs.

The project has also been set up to strengthen the cooperation between all the involved players that are of relevance in THB. The project manages to support a very close cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders. For example, the transfer of knowledge is being secured by inviting all stakeholders to the multidisciplinary THB LIBERI conferences on a regular basis.

11. Has there been a process evaluation?<sup>1</sup> Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the process? Did you make changes accordingly?  
**(max. 300 words)**

As THB LIBERI is an EU-project funded by the ISF there is a strict process evaluation. The project team has to document each objective for the annual report to the EU. In addition to this external evaluation the project THB LIBERI is internally monitored by the responsible unit for EU-projects within the BKA to secure the accordance of the financial support with EU regulations.

The pre-defined indicators were very ambitious but until today every single indicator has been achieved, in many cases over-achieved. Due to the pandemic some changes were necessary to host events later than planned but the readjustments worked out well and the evaluating authorities confirmed the accordance with the EU regulations.

12. Has there been an outcome<sup>2</sup> or impact<sup>3</sup> evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method

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<sup>1</sup> **Process evaluation:** Also called *implementation evaluation*, or *monitoring*, this process documents **how the activities were implemented** in order to determine any deviations from the original planning. It facilitates finding explanations for when the results of the intervention are not as expected.

<sup>2</sup> **Outcome evaluation:** Measures the **direct effect** (i.e., extent of the changes) **of the intervention on the target group, population, or geographic area**. The information produced by the outcome evaluation determines at what level the **objectives were achieved**.

<sup>3</sup> **Impact evaluation:** Measures **long-term effects** of the intervention on the target group, as well as **indirect effects** on the broader community. The information

were used and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the impact? (**Max. 300 words**)

The project performed up to today various measures which might have a significant impact on the situation of THB in Germany. As described above and in the following question a tool for the Internet has been implemented which helps investigators a lot in identifying (young) victims of THB and link suspicious sex offers to an OCG. Unfortunately, it is impossible to measure how many investigations were supported by that tool or how many victims were identified as the tool is completely integrated in the daily work of many police units.

THB LIBERI developed a checklist with indicators for uniformed police units which helps them to detect victims of THB for committing criminal offenses, such as thefts, shoplifting, etc. This is due to the difficulty to separate perpetrators of those crimes from actual victims of THB. As the list was distributed in 2021 the impact might be visible in the annual report on THB which will be available later in 2022.

Concerning the prevention campaign on Social Media various statistics have been created to see the reaction of the viewers (e.g. more than 500,000 views on Twitter). For the prevention campaign in Berlin no evaluation has been made yet.

### **III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.**

13. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

The project THB LIBERI implemented a web crawler in 2020 for prostitution websites. With this tool the identification of victims is simplified. In various cases an identification would not have been possible. Based on specific parameters such as age, availability and price a risk score is being calculated which gives hints on the potential victimness for a person. Tools like this are completely new in the area of THB in Germany and even European-wide only very few countries make regular use of this opportunity due to costs and lack of know-how.

The mentioned 'fake client guideline' is a new method to combat forced prostitution taking place in apartments and hotels and offers a wider choice of measures to get in contact with potential victims.

The mentioned checklist for police agents concerning THB for forced crimes focuses on a very unknown and underestimated type of THB. It helps to sensitize police units throughout Germany.

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produced by the impact evaluation determines at what level the **ultimate goals** of the intervention were achieved.

To improve the willingness of giving a statement a new approach involving ex-victims of THB is currently being planned for Germany.

**IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.**

14. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

The core project team consists of seven German police units, the Austrian and the German Federal Criminal Police Office. During the project period many expert meetings took place including different high-ranking stakeholders from justice, civil society, NGOs and police agents.

In May 2021 the project hosted the event ETIC2021 together with the Council of Europe within the frame of the German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The digital conference was based on THB LIBERI's core areas. More than 250 participants from all over Europe participated including the Anti-trafficking coordinator from the EU, the German ambassador at the Council of Europe and the UN rapporteur on THB. Due to the networking conferences the project is organizing THB LIBERI is widely known as a valuable platform for stakeholders from all disciplines linked to THB.

**V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.**

15. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)

The project THB LIBERI is funded by the Internal Security Fund of the European Union. For the original period (2018-2021; extended to December 2022 due to Covid-19) the project is funded with 1,150,000 euros.

16. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

The project THB LIBERI plans on using the full funding for the important measures, conferences and purchases being made.

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis<sup>4</sup> been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

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<sup>4</sup> **Cost-benefit analysis:** A type of economic evaluation that compares the direct and indirect cost of the resources employed in the intervention, with the equivalent economic value of the benefits.



No.

18. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

Many of the project's outcomes could be mirrored to other Member States. For example, the webcrawler is currently being put on the agenda in various Member States due to the experiences THB LIBERI made and shared. The checklist for forced criminality has reached EUROPOL for adjustments and later a distribution to the Member States.

Some smaller or bigger adjustments might be needed concerning legal measures as the 'fake client guideline' as the legal system is different in every country.

19. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

THB is an international severe crime with high mobility amongst perpetrators and victims. THB LIBERI focuses explicitly on border-crossing investigations of international relevance. In many cases the results of the project were presented in international conference such as EMPACT THB meetings or at ETIC2021.

The financial support is not limited to investigations conducted by partners of the project. Two examples:

- During a Joint Investigation Team with Romania the travel expenses from Romanian colleagues were covered.
- The participation of a German colleague at a Romanian preventive method at high schools was also financed by THB LIBERI.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

The ISF-funded project THB LIBERI is led by the German Federal Criminal Police Office and involves German and Austrian police departments.

The goal of THB LIBERI is to fight trafficking and exploitation of children and young people through a multidisciplinary and innovative approach. It combines knowledge from different sectors in order to raise the awareness for the characteristics of child trafficking and it promotes a common approach to

preventing and combating it. To reach this goal THB LIBERI consists of three core areas according to the current trends in THB: THB online, exploitation within familiar structures and personal evidence.

THB LIBERI is very operational and aims at reaching out to those affected and endangered by the severe crimes of THB.

By linking relevant key players together and by financing complex investigations THB LIBERI contributes to a **safer Europe!**