

PHOTO-VOICE: A glimpse on victims' experiences of human trafficking

It is always difficult to give a voice to emotions, to disclose a painful past. For victims of human trafficking, explaining what they have been through is often a complicated and distressing experience. How can they express the *loneliness* of their *silence*, the *deprivation of liberty* and the feeling of helplessness? How can they recount months of *inhuman living* and *working conditions*, of *fear* and *violence*? How can they describe the sense of *freedom* they felt when, finally, the *hope* for a way to *escape* became reality?

For these reasons, the goal of the Photo Voice project is to offer an opportunity for the voice of human trafficking victims to be heard in public, in a way, which gives them visibility whilst also ensuring their well-being.

11 victims, living in the PAG-ASA shelter in Brussels, worked with us to create these photos. Each picture depicts an image, a scene and a message they wanted to convey to you, to give you a glimpse of their personal experience and to show what it means to be a victim of human trafficking. The victims are present in every picture, both emotionally and physically, as they have envisioned and interpreted a particular aspect of their experience. They come from different countries and suffered different forms of exploitation: the diversity in these pictures reflects the reality of human trafficking today.

All of the pictures represent a moment, a scene, along their road to get through the exploitation: the black & white pictures reflect the reality of the working and living conditions of victims of human trafficking, while the colour pictures carry a positive message.

PAG-ASA have been assisting victims of human trafficking since 1994, and want to continue giving a voice to their experiences, because their stories are an important means not only to raise awareness on human trafficking, but also to transmit a powerful message of strength and hope.

These photos are the voice of the people we help, who were once invisible and voiceless victims of human trafficking but are now empowered individuals, able to make their own decisions and to demand full respect for their human rights.

Find out more about [PAG-ASA](#) and how you can [contribute](#) to their work.

The Photo-Voice exhibition is co-organised by PAG-ASA – Center for Victims of Human Trafficking and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel Research Group on Fundamental Rights and Constitutionalism (FRC) and will run from Monday 5 February to Friday 30 March 2018 on [1st Floor, Building D, Humanities, Sciences & Engineering Campus, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2 1050, Brussel.](#)

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