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SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA OF COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ABSTRACT

The problem of international cooperation for sustainable development in the areas of environmental protection, economics, energy and public goods is a well-known scope of research, which can be classified as a classic canon of analysis in this domain. There is an explicit lack of research in the area of security, particularly in those aspects relating to objectives 8 and 16 of Agenda 2030, referring to combating the crime of human trade. The aim of the publication is to analyse the dynamics of international cooperation for the implementation of sustainable principles in the fight against human trafficking, undertaken in the context of the diagnosis of its effects for the implementation of sustainable principles with the use of resources (created and implemented standards), cooperation structures (global international organisations and their Member States) forming a system of international cooperation, the directions of which are determined by security needs. The article shows the evolution of international law in this area, the cooperation of selected international structures and its effects, as well as the dynamics of change resulting from statistics indicating the directions of implementation of objectives 8 and 16 of the sustainable development of the Agenda 2030. To achieve the objective, the assumptions of institutional theory were applied. The analysis was made using historical, comparative methods and analysis of source documents. The analysis presented in the article allows us to conclude that after the adoption of the Agenda 2030, the dynamics of international cooperation in the analysed area has increased, which is reflected in the new impetus given to the implementation of provisions enshrined in international law and required actions undertaken by member states – signatories of the act. Combating the crime of trafficking in human beings takes place within the framework of a diagnosable multifaceted institutional formula expressed in a detailed division of tasks and competences, allowing for

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coordination at the global level of preventive and operational actions to combat this practice. Global international cooperation for sustainable development in the area of combating trafficking in human beings in the 21st century is implemented in a systemic way and brings results which provide better and better prospects for effective combating of this crime, thus meeting the assumptions and objectives 8 (p. 8.7) and 16 (p. 16.2) of the Agenda 2030.

Keywords: international security, human trafficking, systemic international cooperation, UN, UNODC, Agenda 2030

1. INTRODUCTION

Many publications have been devoted to the topic of international cooperation for sustainable development (SD), considering it from a well-defined, traditional, and widely accepted point of view. These publications describe the cooperation between international organizations in this area, outlining its condition, the obstacles and risks it faces, and the perspectives for its further development as well as the realization of the goals outlined in the accepted documents regarding SD. However, they mostly concern economics (Drzymała, 2016), (Uttama, 2021), (Haseeb & Wattanapongphasuk & Jermittiparsert, 2019), energy policy (Szulecki, 2009), (Vosylius & Rakutis & Tvaronavičienė, 2013), public goods (Latoszek & Proczek & Krukowska, 2016), or the relationships between them (Jugend & Figueiredo & Pinheiro, 2017). Many of the scientific analyses examining these areas concern sustainable development examined in national or local perspectives (Siemiątkowski & Tomaszewski & Marszałek-Kawa & Gierszewski, 2020), including security area (Gierszewski & Siemiątkowski & Urbanek, 2020).

The current article diverges from the classical scope of these analyses in favour of an attempt to define international cooperation in systemic terms (Krampe, 2021). Moreover, it points to an area of SD research which has not yet received much attention in the literature, namely, combating human trafficking.

Due to the wide scope of this term and the large number of areas it concerns, the current article focuses on one important aspect which inspires research – combating human trafficking. Many publications on security systems and human trafficking exist. However, an evident lack of research contextualized within SD and SD-related international cooperation can be observed. This lack is especially visible when one considers the directions expressed in policy declarations intended to implement SD, which are related not to traditional matters of environmental protection, economy, or spatial order, but precisely to security. These directions already justify the necessity of carrying out analyses as well as determine their range and significance for realizing the strategic-policy goals set out in the 2030 Agenda document, where two of the 17 goals (Milligan & Jiménez-Aybar, et al., 2016) concern human trafficking. These are the Goal 8, sec. 8.7., which points to the necessity of implementing immediate and effective solutions for eliminating modern forms of slavery and human trafficking, and Goal 16, sec. 16.2., which posits the elimination of abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

The three components – systemic international cooperation – the subject of research, expressed in long-term cooperation between a number of political actors, SD, being the object of the research, and human trafficking, being the focus of the analyses, form triangle

delineating the scope of the current article. It requires certain assumptions, definitions, and a methodology, which would allow not only for explaining the relationship between the subject and the object within the adopted area of research (i.e., human trafficking, being an area of systemic international cooperation for SD which can be verified empirically), but also for describing its dynamics.

The most common definition of SD in the literature comes from the well-known “Agenda 21” document adopted as a resolution during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It defines SD in two ways. The first considers SD as a process of development of countries, cities, businesses, communities, etc. which closely unites the needs of the current generation with the future generations’ capabilities for meeting them. The second, nearer to the nature of the current analysis, defines SD as a “series of changes, in which utilizing resources, structures of investments, directing technological developments, and institutional structures should be carried out such as to not collide with future and current needs” (UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987). This definition allows for the creation of a space within which to explicate the relationships between SD and systemic international cooperation in the area of combating human trafficking, defined as the cooperation between primary and secondary subjects of international law, occurring on the basis of mutual obligations set out in international law, realized using tools/instruments available to all parties and which allow for meeting the goals of the cooperation (in this case, combating human trafficking). Defined this way, the object and subject of analysis allow for formulating the following **research question**: What are the dynamics of the effects of international cooperation in realizing the principles of SD in the area of combating human trafficking from the perspective of the utilized resources (the created and implemented norms), structures of cooperation (international organizations of global reach and their member states), and does the direction of these dynamics collide with future and current security needs in the analysed area? Due to space limitations of the article format, the current analysis takes into account data from one reliable source – the UNODC reports, international law changes, and the dynamics of their implementation in the 21st century. To answer the above research question, the article sets out to verify the following **hypothesis**:

Systemic, global international cooperation for SD in the area of combating human trafficking in the 21st century is realized effectively and with consideration of future generations, which is evident in:

- a. *the directions of the implemented laws and their changes as well as levels of implementation for combating human trafficking which respond to security threats in this area and which are in line with SD goals.*
- b. *a multifaceted institutional formula of combating human trafficking, expressed via a detailed division of tasks and competences coordinating, on a global level, the preventive actions aimed to prevent this crime,*
- c. *statistical data showing a global increase of the criminalization of human trafficking-related crimes.*

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary materials serving to define the subject and object are the theoretical publications defining the subject and the object of the analysis as well as source documents pointing to their understanding and interpretation, which allow for establishing appropriate theoretical definitions using both analytical and synthetic methods. In turn, these definitions enable the consideration of mutual relationships and dynamics in the area of the object of the research. In order to capture the changes in the functioning of the system of international cooperation for SD in the area of combating human trafficking, the comparative method was used. It allows for identifying the effects of its activity. The source of data used in the current article are the UNODC reports on changes in the global dynamics of the scale of crimes in this area, resulting from the actions of international organizations and their member states, which are reported to the UN. The empirical material used in this article is available on official websites of the appropriate organizations and it constitutes the most reliable source of public data. The choice of sources was motivated by the author's awareness of the individual specifics of gathering and publishing data on combating human trafficking, both by international organizations which create the framework of cooperative prevention of this crime as well as by non-governmental organizations which aim to provide support for human trafficking victims. The specifics of human trafficking and a long-term lack of unified, global defining frameworks causes frequent disproportions between official data and estimations. This is noted by Antonio Guterres in the foreword to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018: "Without evidence of where we stand now we cannot confidently chart our path forward in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, this report also reflects on the challenges faced in the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of reliable, timely, accessible and sufficiently disaggregated data, and calls for better evidence-based policymaking" (United Nations, 2018). These statistical disproportions are also caused by the following factors

1. not taking into account all forms of human trafficking by some member states of international organizations, which leads to a lowering of global incidence statistics,
2. the belief that official criminal statistics underreport human trafficking (Horoszowski, 1965), leading to the use of estimation data only by those countries which consider the detected cases of human trafficking to represent only "the tip of the iceberg." In turn, this is motivated by:
 - a. the crimes not being reported by the victims due to a lack of knowledge of the law, fear of repeated victimization, and fear of social rejection,
 - b. other classifications of the crime or the victims themselves, which might be a result of improper identification of the victims' real harm by the state institutions.
 - c. legal and illegal movement of human trafficking victims.

The above considerations thus legitimize the author's choice of empirical material for comparative analyses and conclusions. Moreover, the method of legal analysis serves to study and evaluate the source documents, while the historical method used in the analysis allows for identifying the changes in legislative matters and the development of international cooperation in the area of combating human trafficking.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGES IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE 21ST CENTURY AS A REALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A. NORMATIVE CHANGES IN THE AREA OF COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE 21ST CENTURY – THE GLOBAL LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS

The principal normative changes in international law concerning the combating of human trafficking in the 21st century were brought about through the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in Palermo (12–15 December 2000). The main goal of the Convention was the promotion of mutual activities for more effective combating and prevention of transnational organized crime, defined as each criminal activity undertaken in the territory of more than one country, realized by a criminal group operating in the territory of at least two countries, as well as situations where preparatory activities were carried out in a country different than the one where the crime took place. This document, created under the auspices of the United Nations, constitutes the primary international law act, while the supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, defines the modern understanding of human trafficking in Article 3 as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs,” simultaneously noting that the consent of the victim is irrelevant where any of the aforementioned means have been used (United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000). Analysing the above definition, three main elements can be distinguished. These are:

- activities – (recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons),
- forms of coercion – (use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability),
- aims – (sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs) (Andrees, 2006).

Accordingly, the main aims of penalizing human trafficking in international law are: the prevention and combating of its occurrence, the protection and support of its victims, and the development of international cooperation.

In addition to defining this phenomenon, the 15 November 2000 supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (henceforth the Palermo Protocol) was also intended to penalize it. According to its resolutions, the definition of a given offence as a human trafficking offence must be legitimized in specific criminal law acts of the Protocol’s membership countries. Article 5 of the Protocol specifies the requirement of intentionality for a given act to be qualified as human trafficking. Additionally, it considers the following as offences: attempts to commit, participating as an accomplice, and organizing or directing other persons (Kozłowska, 2007). An important

condition of the above definition is the fact that human trafficking offences must have an international character and must involve an organized criminal group. The issue of human trafficking is also undertaken by the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 15 November 2000. (Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000).

Another important document adopted by the United Nations to combat human trafficking is the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography of 15 November 2000, adopted in New York on May 25, 2000. It defines “sale of children” as any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration. On the basis of this legal act, the adopting states have become obligated to sanction this crime regardless of its territorial scope, complexity of the international crime group engaging in it, or the actions of any individual person (Gajewska & Kuhn & Popławska & Suda, 2011). Article 1 of this document calls for the prohibition of the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. It penalizes the following acts, regardless of their international and organized character or lack thereof:

- The offering, delivering, or accepting, by whatever means, a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, transfer of organs for profit, or engagement in forced labour,
- Improperly inducing consent, as an intermediary, for the adoption of a child in violation of applicable international legal instruments on adoption,
- Offering, obtaining, procuring or providing a child for prostitution,
- Producing, distributing, disseminating, importing, exporting, offering, selling or possessing of child pornography.

The above legal acts constitute the normative foundations for realizing SD principles in the area of combating human trafficking, obliging the UN member states to implement their regulations in their criminal law. They define the scope and character of human trafficking, adjusting its understanding to the modern conditions of the 21st century.

B. THE 2030 AGENDA AS AN INSTRUMENT STRENGTHENING AND HASTENING THE ACTIVITIES IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

To hasten the implementation of the above resolutions and to delineate the developmental directions for the following years – among others – the leaders of the UN countries have adopted the UN 2030 Agenda for SD on 25 September 2015. The Agenda is an ambitious plan for transformations in five areas of key importance to humanity, including matters of peace and security, achieved by the realization of Goals 8 and 16, referring to the promotion of a peaceful, just, and inclusive society, free from fear and violence. Task 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda obliges the UN member states to implement solutions to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children. This document significantly advances the topic of preventing and combating human trafficking, including it in a global strategy of civilizational development for the years up to 2030. Although the goals and tasks set out in the document were already present in the 2000 and 2005 UN legal acts, considering the pace of their implementation and the issues related to assessing the scale of this phenomenon, as well as the delays by several member states in adopting a unified

statutory interpretation of the crime of human trafficking (UNODC, 2014), the 2030 Agenda has become a very useful catalyst of changes in these areas, giving a clear signal to advance the pace of both the implementation of laws in this area of security as well as to strengthen international cooperation.

Another problem taken into consideration by the member states signing the 2030 Agenda is the scale of human trafficking – i.e., data gathering and the measurement methodology of this crime. The complete, data-based scale of human trafficking is currently not known and it rather relies on estimation data. The UNODC reports do not contain such data and are based on incidents detected in and reported by the UN member states. The difficulty in estimating the actual scale of human trafficking globally is caused by numerous factors, which have been mentioned above (see pp. 3–4). To increase the degree of identifiability and appropriate classification of crimes as human trafficking and the ability of the UNODC to estimate their scale, a number of solutions was implemented, aimed at improving international cooperation as well as preparing and putting into practice appropriate measurement methodologies of this crime. Although these activities are intended to reveal the actual global scale of human trafficking, they still remain based estimations to a greater or lesser degree. This results from a continuing divide between countries regarding the effectiveness of detecting human trafficking as well as the large “gray area,” which also includes the victims not coming forward to report their harm. A significant step forward in terms of data gathering and implementing appropriate methodologies was the adoption of the obligations set out by the 2030 Agenda. In this context, the document was an explicit stimulus towards intensifying the data gathering efforts and it obligated the signing countries to gather and report statistics. The document pays particular attention to child trafficking, including violence and torture, by obligating the signing countries in Task 16.2 to undertake activities aimed at combating these crimes. It also obligates the countries to measure the scale of human trafficking crimes per 100 000 citizens, broken down by gender, age, and type of exploitation. To realize this task, member states are obligated to gather appropriate data and define methodologies allowing for estimating the scale of human trafficking taking place within their territories. Satisfying methodologies for calculating the scale of human trafficking and thus realizing Task 16.2 of SD as set out in the 2030 Agenda have been functioning since 2018, though discussions about measurement instruments and methodological approaches towards realizing the SD tasks of the 2030 Agenda are constantly underway, presenting both original approaches designed by member states as well as best practice guidelines (Allen & Nejdawi, & El-Baba, et al., 2017), (Le Blanc, 2015). An example is the First Global Workshop for the Voluntary National Reviews to be presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2020, held in Oslo in November 2019 (Global VNR Workshop, 2020). However, including the above tasks and obligations within the SD framework has elevated the issue of estimating the scale of human trafficking in importance.

The A/72/L1 resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 September 2017, being a political declaration on the implementation of the UN global plan of action to combat trafficking in persons (United Nation, General Assembly, 2017), is an undoubted source of support for the realization of Goals 8 and 16 of the 2030 Agenda by the UN. It points out and confirms the fundamental significance of the 2030 Agenda as an integrated plan of action for SD, including the combating of human trafficking (Section 2). The member states were once again called to ratify the Convention and the Palermo Protocol as well as to introduce high-quality mechanisms and instruments for combating human trafficking which

would guarantee complete and effective realization of its directives (Section 5). Furthermore, the document underscores the necessity for implementing protective measures, care, and support in the return to normal social life for the victims of human trafficking as well as the necessity for implementing deterring punishments for the perpetrators of these types of crimes (Section 9). The leading role of the UNODC in coordinating the activities of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) and in reporting the progress in realizing Task 16.2 in the form of reports published every two years (Section 17) was also highlighted. Finally, the document encourages the creation of multi-level partnerships – between countries, civil society institutions, business, and regional and global organizations – for the purpose of combating human trafficking or closer cooperation and the institutionalization thereof.

3.2. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON A GLOBAL SCALE – TOWARDS A SYSTEMIC INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN REALIZING TASKS 8.7 AND 16.2 OF THE 2030 AGENDA – THE STRUCTURAL ASPECT OF COOPERATION

In order to realize the strategic SD Tasks 8.7 and 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda, modern countries are equipped with powerful infrastructures, designed over the past 70 years, which allow for close international cooperation on a global level. The scope of the goals outlined in and adopted by this document fits with the competences of the international structures functioning in the wide spectrum of human rights protection, which are becoming increasingly systemic in character. This cooperation is based on a range of organizations and mechanisms of cooperation, established on the basis of international rules and norms. These organizations fulfill several roles allowing them to combat human trafficking on an appropriate, i.e., global scale and they currently constitute a necessary condition for effective combating of this phenomenon by the UN member states. These structures (due to considerations of space, the author analyses only some of these international organizations in terms of their competences and cooperation) play a legislative part (they are creators of international law) – e.g., the UN, a coordinating part – they provide a unified interpretation and effective implementation of the law – e.g., the UNODC, and some of them play the operative part – e.g., Interpol.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the crime of human trafficking is a subject of interest and cooperation between the member states of the UN system of human rights protection. This cooperation is founded on two types of basic cooperation – the first based on the UN Charter, the second – on the UN treaty systems.

The first type of cooperation is realized through the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council as well as the following offices: the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The mechanism of the Human Rights Council is realized through two instruments: a. the so-called Universal Periodic Reviews concerning human rights, which obligate member states to report to the treaty institutions the scale of human trafficking as well as the adopted protective measures for its victims, and b. the direction-thematic mandates realized by appointed Special Rapporteurs who present recommendations and addresses to the governments of the countries they visit. These recommendations are based on information gathered from non-governmental organizations and field visit observations. Among the Rapporteurs holding the mandate for combating human trafficking, the following bear mentioning: The Special Rapporteur on

trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences. However, these structures do not possess instruments allowing for the realization of the presented recommendations, which translates into significant limitations in the influence exerted on member states in these areas. The 2030 Agenda reinforces these competences, as evidenced by the data on the increase in scale of reporting of human trafficking crimes by the UN member states. This is also confirmed by the 2018 UNODC report (discussed in greater detail on pages 14 and 15).

Being a UN official, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also possesses soft instruments of influence. These are the commentaries for legal acts adopted by the UN as well as the recommendations regarding the rules and guidelines on human rights and human trafficking. The commissioner realizes their competences via projects, programs, and cooperation with UN agencies, international organizations and their offices, governments, non-governmental organizations, and local communities (Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 2008).

The second UN official responsible for combating human trafficking is the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Their competences include the coordination of international activities aimed at protecting refugees, solving the global refugee issue, prevention and elimination of statelessness, providing protection for stateless individuals, as well as giving humanitarian aid and protection to the so-called internally displaced persons. Through providing access to asylum procedures in their countries of residence, the commissioner grants protection to persons at risk for becoming victims of human trafficking or persons concerned about discrimination in their home countries due to their victim status (Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 2008).

The treaty systems of human rights protection realize their tasks through specialized treaty structures in the form of monitoring committees. Their aim is to oversee the implementation and honouring of international agreements concerning the international protection of human rights. Within the area of human trafficking, they identify and define the most important issues as well as provide interpretations of given norms of international conventions in the form of commentaries and recommendations.

The structures devoted to combating human trafficking as part of the treaty system of human rights protection are the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Committee on Migrant Workers. In the context of Task 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda, special attention must be given to the activities of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which has published a range of interpretations of legal acts concerning human trafficking in 2002–2006. Moreover, it has played a significant role by adopting general guidelines on the form and content of the reports on the realization of the 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child and revising them again in 2005. It has indicated the solutions the member states should adopt in order to implement the regulations on preventing child trafficking, as well as the content of the information which should be included in the reports. All of the committees enumerated above play an important part in realizing Task 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda by initiating actions centered around repeated calls for the UN member states to ratify the

conventions on combating human trafficking, including the Palermo Protocol definitions of human trafficking into their penal codes (Concluding Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Poland, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2007), carrying out appropriate studies and measurements to estimate the scale of human trafficking and progress in its combating, providing appropriate care for victims of human trafficking, as well as adopting and implementing national programs, strategies, and instruments allowing for effective combating and monitoring of this crime (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), 2009).

A range of agencies within the UN system function as part of international cooperation in various aspects of combating human trafficking. These agencies include: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), among others. They realize tasks concerning preventive programs and/or appropriate support and protection addressed to groups and individuals who are at particularly high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

In 2007, on the basis of, among others, the structures listed above, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) was created. It serves to strengthen and improve the coordination of individual UN agencies and other international organizations combating human trafficking. The ICAT was created on the basis of the 61/180 resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The initiators of the cooperation were the ILO, the IOM, the UNICEF, the UNIFEM, the UNDAW, the UNHCR, and the UNODC, with the UNODC also being granted the coordinating role. The functioning of the Coordination Group was intended to provide a complex and holistic perspective for solving the problem of human trafficking, especially the problems faced by its victims. Adopted in 2010, the UN Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons contained a call addressed to all subjects of this organization to coordinate their activities in this area through the ICAT, as well as to strengthen and support this structure in the realization of its tasks. This call yielded concrete results in the form of formalizing the cooperation with such organizations as the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-Interpol), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Organization on Migration (IOM), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), or the World Bank, which are currently members of this structure. Currently, 22 member organizations and 2 partner organizations function within the ICAT. The ICAT has been tasked with the realization of such functions as: guaranteeing the functioning of a platform for the exchange of information, experience, and best practices in activities against human trafficking; supporting the activities of the UN and other international organizations aimed at providing full and comprehensive implementation of all international instruments and norms concerning the prevention and combating of human trafficking, and the granting of protection and support for victims of human trafficking; work on a comprehensive, coordinated, and holistic approach to human trafficking, taking into account matters of gender and age, and based on an approach

consistent with the human rights catalogue; promoting effective and efficient utilization of existing resources, engaging to the fullest extent possible the existing regional and national mechanisms. Cooperation within the ICAT has resulted in several conferences which define and outline new problems in the area of combating human trafficking, pointing to their causes, suggested preventive methods, as well as instruments of support for the victims of these crimes and the necessity to punish its perpetrators. An example of such activities are the meetings on such topics as improper use of technology while simultaneously using its potential to combat human trafficking or the role and significance of technology in the area of human trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic (Covid19-global crisis. ICAT calls coordinated action address trafficking person, 2020). Since 2020, the Coordination Group also promotes multidimensional partnerships to combat human trafficking in supply chains, especially farming, fishing, and production. Additionally, its achievements involve the publishing of over 300 recommendations for countries and their governments in the area of the interpretation and implementation of the UN Protocol on human trafficking, including the calls to undertake concrete actions by countries, international organizations, and businesses to solve the problem of human trafficking in supply chains. The significance of this latter issue for the realization of SD goals has been highlighted by Vanja Ostojic, Deputy Chief and Principal Procurement Specialist at the ILO, who underscored the role of the UN and its potential of influence on the global market in the area of realizing the SD goals. He stated that “the procurement divisions of 39 agencies are collaborating in the UN High-Level Committee on Management’s Procurement Network with the purpose of promoting the strategic importance of procurement and supply management in a transparent and accountable manner” (ICAT promotes multi stakeholder partnerships address trafficking supply chains including, 2020). This meeting has allowed for the establishment of further, close cooperation between both organizations and the forming of a special task force to design and coordinate a coherent and complex approach towards combating human trafficking and forced labour in supply chains through the activities of the UN procurement divisions. Additionally, this structure is responsive to the challenges facing the international community in combating human trafficking through appropriate publications, conferences, and guidelines on the emergent problems, such as COVID-19, which impact the dynamics of crime in this area (COVID-19 pandemic and its impact for victims and survivors of trafficking in persons, 2020). The importance of combating human trafficking for the realization of SD principles has been already recognized in 2016 during an UNODC-organized conference in Vienna. The participants included the ICAT leaders, UNODC representatives, as well as members of the ICAT Working Group, partner organizations of the OBWE and the ILO, the UNHCR, and the IOM. This event represented an ideal opportunity for the panelists to present existing efforts in the area of combating human trafficking and to exchange views in order to further strengthen and expand international cooperation in this area. The importance of implementing preventive measures against human trafficking via complex and long-term SD goal frameworks was also emphasized (Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, 2020).

The perspective of international cooperation outlined above invites a deepened analysis of its functional dimension, which is exemplified by the cooperation between the UNODC and Interpol.

The relationship between Interpol and the UN was established in 1996, when Interpol became a Permanent Observer. Its status was established by General Assembly Resolution 51/1 and was formalized in a Cooperation Agreement of 1997.

The cooperation between these two organizations has been legitimized by the opening of two offices – the Office of the Special Representative of INTERPOL to the United Nations in New York was opened in 2004, while a subsidiary Permanent Observer Office was opened at the UN Office in Vienna in 2018. This was a response to the scope and requirements of close cooperation resulting from the challenges facing these structures in the areas of human trafficking, and it testifies to the necessity of intensifying measures to combat this crime. It also allows for a more precise utilization of the organizations' instruments and an intensification of the dynamics of cooperation. Additionally, it facilitates constant contact between Interpol representatives and permanent missions of the UN member states, granting access to information about compliance with international law in given countries as well as to identification and establishment of relationships with potential partners, crucial for Interpol's activities.

In the area of human trafficking, Interpol cooperates closely with the ICAT, which consists of 22 members promoting a coordinated approach to tasks related to combating human trafficking and the protection and support of its victims. This goal is also realized through the participation of Interpol in the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. Of particular importance for the cooperation between Interpol and the UN in the area of combating human trafficking is one of its agencies, the UNODC. In order to increase the dynamic character of mutual activities and their complementarity, both these structures began work on a close partnership in 2015 (Interpol, 2020), which led to the inclusion of Interpol in this structure. They have based it on a comprehensive, complementary approach to cooperation in the areas of justice and criminal conduct on a global scale, aimed at increasing the effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency in combating human trafficking. The complementarity involves the division of tasks between the two institutions while simultaneously maintaining their mutual correlation. The UNODC provides the UN member states with support in meeting the established legal and judiciary requirements, conducts research, and provides technical support in the area of human trafficking, whereas Interpol acts from an operational position in law enforcement, offers investigational and operational support for the member countries, guarantees the exchange of information, coordinates shared police activities between the member countries, and seeks to increase their potential via a system of training. The cooperation of both organizations is expressed through mutually realized enterprises such as the AIRCOP project (UNODC, 2021), whose chief actors are the UNODC, Interpol, and the World Customs Organization. It is intended to increase the potential and combating of threats to airports in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Near East in the areas of detecting and preventing human trafficking, among others. The UNODC and Interpol also realize joint projects in other areas, such as, for example, combating drug trade – the CRIMJUST project (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020) – or combating gun trade – the Trigger IV project. They also take part in umbrella initiatives linking various organizations such as, for example, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 2020). These initiatives and participation of these organizations, closely cooperating over the past three years, signals further, increasingly dynamic cooperation also in the area of combating human trafficking.

It seems that the progress in normative and international structural cooperation outlined above should yield concrete and measurable effects. Does it?

4. RESULTS

The effectiveness of developing international cooperation in the 21st century in the area of adjustments to laws combating human trafficking – the perspective of sustainable development of Goals 8, Task 8.7 and 16, Task 16.2

The first attempts towards a closer international cooperation on a global scale in the 21st century aimed at combating and penalizing this crime have already been initiated in April 2006 under the auspices of the UN and the UNODC. They primarily focused on the attempts to encourage all member states to implement the categories of human trafficking adopted in the Palermo Protocol. 2009 was a milestone year for this cooperation, which resulted in the first report summarizing the effects of activities in this area (UNODC, 2009). The document, prepared by the UNODC, presents an organized and defined catalogue of human trafficking-related crimes together with a list of member states which adopted it into their internal legal codes. The report confirmed the involvement of the majority of the member states in punishing the crimes in this area and in granting support to its victims, which highlighted the issue of their vulnerability and responsibility for this large-scale issue. Aside from improving the situation in this area, the report also pointed towards a certain reticence of some member states, and its authors called for improving the pace of activities in this direction. The slow pace of implementing laws adopted on an international level within the UN by the “marauding” countries is visible in the fact that, due to the efforts of the UNODC, the number of countries which have signed the UN Protocol against trafficking in persons has increased only twofold in the ten years between 2000 and 2008. In percentage terms, this means that 63% of the 155 countries adopted the resolutions intended to combat human trafficking in regard to its main forms. Sixteen per cent of the countries adopted resolutions intended to combat human trafficking which covered only some elements of the Palermo Protocol’s definition, whereas 4/5ths of the entire 155 countries possessed functioning regulations on combating human trafficking (in 2003, only 1/3 of the countries possessed them). Moreover, 54% of the countries implemented these regulations on an operational level, creating special police units for combating human trafficking, and over half of them designed national plans of actions in this area (UNODC, 2009). A problem remaining in the topic under analysis is the issue of a lack of unified legislature defining the crime of human trafficking and a lack of reliable data on the global scale of this issue, limiting the ability to precisely estimate the effects of the activities undertaken by the appropriate law enforcement organs of the member states and the effectiveness of international organizations. This latter problem resulted from a lack of a permanent program which would allow for building a base for gathering all data on human trafficking. Another problematic issue was that while the Palermo Protocol required states to criminalize human trafficking, it did not contain any “hard” rules requiring nation states to protect victims or take preventive initiatives. These issues, undoubtedly slowing down the process of combating trafficking and the low effectiveness of international cooperation, have been pointed out by many scholars in their analyses. (Barrick, Lattimore, Pitts, & Zhang, 2014; Britton & Dean, 2014; Guerardi, 2013; Avdeyeva, 2012; Carr, 2012).

Realizing the UNODC directives was finalized in the 2014 Report. It revealed that the directives yielded concrete and expected results. In 2014, 90% of UN member states possessed legislature on combating human trafficking (UNODC, 2014). However, a remaining problem was the continued inconsistency with international law, including differences in

defining this crime by the legal systems of various member states, which implied its lack of coherence with regards to treating or acknowledging the forms of the crime of human trafficking clearly defined in the Palermo Protocol.

Significant progress in the area of consistency between legal acts and the Palermo Protocol as well as the unified interpretation of the crime of human trafficking was made after 2015. According to the UN Periodic Report of 2018, 168 out of 181 UN member states possessed legal acts penalizing human trafficking (UNODC, 2018). Only 12 out of the 193 UN member countries did not report reliable data on the topic of the status of their legislature in this area. Another 9 countries only penalized some forms of human trafficking as defined in international law, and 4 countries did not implement any legal acts combating this phenomenon. Between 2012 and 2018, 15 member states adjusted their internal legislature to the requirements set out in the Protocol adopted in 2003.

The dynamics of these changes can be made especially visible by pointing to the developments in UN member states in terms of penalizing human trafficking. They present a picture of the dynamics of the realization of the Agenda 2030 SD Goals 8, Task 8.7 and 16, Task 16.2. Over the years, this progress was as follows:

Table 1. The dynamics of criminalizing human trafficking, taking into account the forms, set out in the 2003 UN Protocol defining its character and scope, included in the member countries' legislature. Proportions of countries in the years 2003–2018, in percentages.

	All or most forms (%)	Partially adopted forms (%)	No acknowledgement of the forms of the crime (%)
2003	18	23	59
2008	54	19	27
2012	76	14	10
2014	83	11	6
2016	88	9	3
2018	93	5	2

Source: own elaboration based on UNITED NATIONS (2009, 2014, 2018). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

In 2003, only 18% of the member states had regulations allowing for combating human trafficking in all or most forms defined in the UN Protocol of 2003. Only 23% reported having norms penalizing a part of the forms outlined in the definition of human trafficking in the document, and 59% did not have norms penalizing this crime at all. Evidence for considering global human trafficking as a very serious problem can be found in the evidently progressive dynamic of changes adjusting national legislatures to the requirements of international law, including Goals 8, Task 8.7 and 16, Task 16.2, outlined in the 2030 Agenda. This is because only 2% of the world's nations do not consider human trafficking as a crime and do not undertake activities aimed at realizing SD goals, while 93% of the countries are realizing this goal (at least in the sphere of implementing international legal regulations within national law codes). An important conclusion of the above review is the systematic quality of the progress in this sphere, which suggests the implementation of these regulations and the

realization of this goal in all UN member states in the near future. It can also be clearly seen that in this case, there are no significant differences in tasks between the nations cooperating (as part of the UN) on the international arena, which is evident in the relatively short period – 15 years of their reaching of full agreement in this area. Moreover, the unified statutory interpretation of the crime of human trafficking in a global scale by the member countries also seems important, which can be seen in the lowering of the proportion of countries which acknowledge only part of all forms in the 2000 international norm as human trafficking (a decrease from 23% in 2003 to 5% in 2018).

The legislative changes in the UN member states indicated above appear to be correlated with the results of investigations by their national courts within the analysed area of combating human trafficking.

Table 2. Number of convictions of human trafficking between 2007 and 2017, in percentages

Years / Yearly percentage of registered convictions in the overall number of countries included in the UNODC surveys	No registered convictions	Between 1 and 10 convictions	Between 11 and 50 convictions	Over 50 convictions
2007–2010	16	23	25	18
2010–2012	15	26	26	16
2012–2014	15	25	30	15
2014–2017	8	27	32	17

Source: Own elaboration based on UNITED NATIONS (2009, 2014, 2018). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

Together with the ratification and implementation of international law, the percentage of cases not ending in a conviction for crimes of this type visibly decreases. Only 8% of the countries did not register any convictions for this crime, which should be treated as a 50% increase in this area since 2007–2010. Of note is also the increase in the general number of convictions observed in 76% of the countries, with this increase being especially visible with regards to the 1–10 and 10–50 per year intervals.

Taking into account other indices, according to data published by the UNODC, since 2003, the number of detected instances of human trafficking is successively increasing, which is a result of geographic expansions in gathering and reporting of data on this crime by the UN member states. For comparison, in 2003, this was only 39 states, whereas in 2016, 97 states reported 7 thousand cases in 2003 and 24 thousand cases in 2016. The detection rate of these crimes is also dynamically increasing – 40% more were detected in 2016 than in 2011 (UNODC, 2018), which is evidence of the establishment and effective functioning of law enforcement institutions in member states as well as the expanded – in accordance with the Palermo Protocol – definition of this crime.

Despite the optimistic indicators resulting from the analysed reports that allow to look with hope at the effectiveness of the implemented international cooperation, the literature on the analysis of individual issues and geographical areas of combating trafficking in human

beings points to a number of phenomena that should fill with concern and that seem to be powerful obstacles on the way to the elimination of this practice. These include mainly: the intensification of migration processes (Anderson, 2012), the transnational nature of the crime, supported by the processes of digital technologies and the widespread access to the Internet, treated in instrumental terms, implying difficulties in law enforcement at national and international levels (Elliott & McCartan, 2013), the incompatible interpretation of laws that allow exploitation and slave labour relations to be sustained, issues of exclusion of certain minority groups from legal protection in favour of combating trafficking, lack of synergy between anti-trafficking legislation and national policies, difficulties related to historical and cultural conditions in understanding and interpreting the crime of trafficking in human beings and its victims, lack of participatory projects aimed at raising awareness of the mechanisms and elements of the crime or failure to adapt the content of international organisations' programmes aimed at victims of trafficking to their diverse and specific needs to enable them to return to normal life (Goździak & Vogel, 2020). Obviously, the above reasons do not exhaust the entire catalogue of issues that require improvement and greater attention from the cooperation of international organisations and represent a challenge for them as a further step towards maturity in achieving sustainable development goals in the area of combating trafficking in human beings.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The above reflections and comparisons allow for putting forward several conclusions to the hypothesis of the article.

1. The legal acts, successively implemented by international organizations, expand the subject matter of the crime of human trafficking, define its scope (the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime), and penalize it, simultaneously identifying the groups most vulnerable to victimization (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children). The adoption of the 2030 Agenda allowed for a significant expansion of international cooperation between countries and international organizations. The planning-strategic character of the Agenda also became an impetus for realizing the regulations set out in international law and undertaking the necessary related activities by the member states – signatories of the act. These advances are evident in the effects of international cooperation both in the areas of detecting human trafficking, the number of convictions, as well as criminalization of this crime by the international community. On the basis of the data cited in this text, it can be concluded that the evolution of international law is heading towards the realization of Tasks 8.7 and 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda and that it is a satisfactory response to the current threats related to human trafficking as well as an adequate direction for the propagating and implementing this law by the member states. The above results stemming from the analysis carried out lead to a conclusion that the assumption about the direction of the implemented laws, its changes, and levels of implementation in the area of combating human trafficking respond to the security threats in the analysed area, are consistent with SD goals, and work towards realizing these principles is correct.

2. The second conclusion of the analysis concerns the institutional formula of international cooperation. It has to be stated that the international community has developed a comprehensive array of international organizations and structures devoted to combating human

trafficking which are mutually compatible (e.g., UNODC and Interpol), creating a system of cooperation which allows for a coherent realization of Tasks 8.7 and 16.2 – combating human trafficking. This cooperation is developing particularly dynamically in the context of the UN system, which unifies the most important structures combating human trafficking on an international level. It joins member organizations which functioned individually for many years and which have different ranges and types of competences, e.g., Interpol as a member of the ICAT. This cooperation takes place in the form of meetings, including conferences and seminars, and is based on a closer cooperation in the areas of information exchange, mutual use thereof, and the popularization of best practices. The scope and form of international cooperation are subjected to changes determined by the challenges facing the international community – new structures of cooperation are being created, which are engaged in combating human trafficking, methods, and measures of preventing and combating crimes are being defined, together with specifying the institutions responsible for coordinating these activities on the international level, for example, the ICAT and the UNODC, being UN agencies responsible for effective cooperation between the member organizations of the ICAT. The analysis in the current text thus allows for concluding that combating the crime of human trafficking is being carried out within a multidimensional institutional formula expressed in a detailed division of tasks and competences which allow for coordinating preventive and operational activities combating this crime on a global level.

3. The third group of conclusions concerns the effectiveness of international cooperation in the analysed area. On the basis of the current analysis, it can be observed that the realization of the aims set out in the 2030 Agenda, including Tasks 8.7 and 16.2 is carried out through the system of international law and international structures responsible for activities aimed at effective combating of human trafficking, and it results in specific effects in the member states of these organizations, which is evidenced in the statistics they publish on an international level. They allow for constant improvements in definitions of not only the problem of human trafficking itself, but also new instruments and solutions of combating this problem developed in response to arising needs. Internet platforms and e-mail addresses maintained by international organizations are being created, which allow not only the victims of human trafficking, but also national institutions and non-government organizations combating human trafficking to seek support. Statistics also show an increase in the engagement of member states in criminalizing human trafficking, preventing the stigmatization of its victims, granting them support in their return to normal life, as well as an increase in the interest in international cooperation aimed at revealing the real scale of this crime. These effects define an exit from the system of international cooperation and, creating a new reality in this area, determine new expectations and challenges. The real picture of the scale of the crime of human trafficking, new methods of its perpetration, and identification of groups vulnerable to victimization allows, in turn – due to feedback mechanisms – for the formulation of new postulates, demands, and expectations addressed to international structures, which can be interpreted as elements awaiting the inclusion into the system of international cooperation.

However, this systemic nature of cooperation is not perfect and requires many corrections and new improved methods of cooperation. These deficits result from a number of obstacles specific to global problems related to the necessity of globalisation of certain solutions allowing for smooth adaptation of anti-trafficking methods and tools to local conditions and even stronger commitment to strengthening the maturity of cooperation.

In light of the above considerations, it has to be concluded that global cooperation for SD in the area of combating human trafficking in the 21st century is being realized in a systemic manner and yields results giving increasingly better perspectives for effective combating of this crime, which realizes the assumptions Goals 8.7 and 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda.

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