



REACH

**WEBINAR
GOOD PRACTICES
27th January 10:00- 11:30**

Collaboration between specialized entities and law enforcement agencies in the detection, identification, and referral of victims of human trafficking at the Madrid airport



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Legal Framework, Victim's Rights and Role of Specialised NGOs in Spain



Legal Framework on THB - Spain

Law on rights and freedoms of foreigners, Article 59 bis, 2009	Special protection regime for irregular migrants identified as potential victims of trafficking (VTHB).
Framework Protocol for the protection of VTHB, 2011	Clear guidelines for detecting, identifying, supporting, and protecting VTHB help improve coordination and ensure comprehensive assistance.
Instruction 6/2016, Ministry of Interior, 2016	Strengthens law-enforcement action against trafficking through close cooperation with specialized NGOs during identification and protection.
Asylum law, Art.46, 2009	Recognizes VTHB as a particularly vulnerable group , requiring adapted measures and access to appropriate support throughout the international protection process.
Barajas Procedure, M. of Migration, M. of Equality, UNCHR and Specialized NGOs, 2019	Referral mechanism helps detect and assist potential trafficking victims who apply for international protection.

THB Victim's Rights in Spain

Victim's right	Description
Detection	Can be carried by any private person, NGO, civil servant or public authority.
Access to support services	VTHB can access specialised support services, regardless of formal identification by the police or reporting.
Formal identification	On the basis of reasonable grounds and indicators identified by the specialist police authorities, with the support and collaboration of specialist social entities.
Recovery & reflection period	Once they have identified a foreign national in an irregular situation as VTHB, law enforcement asks the authorities (the Government Delegation) to issue the RRP. Valid for minimum of 90 days and can be renewed.
Residence & work permit	Two Paths: a) Based on the victim's cooperation with the police/judicial authorities b) Based on her/his personal situation as a victim of the crime.
International protection	International protection procedure is compatible with the THB regulation. A VTHB can claim asylum and access rights recognised by both systems.

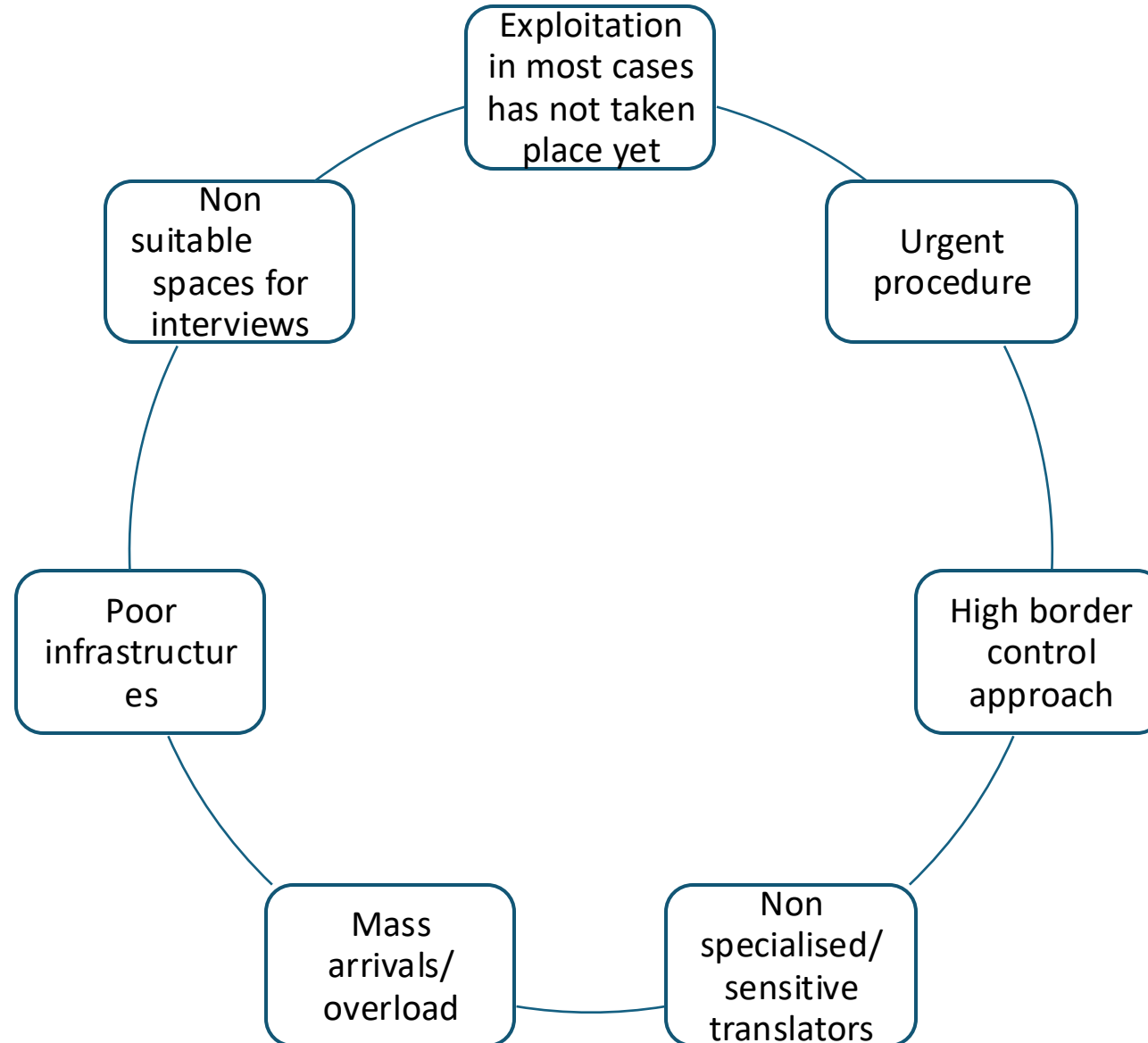
Role of Specialized NGOs

- Detection of possible cases
- Collaboration with specialised law enforcement groups in formal identification.
- Provide comprehensive support services, including accommodation, specialised counselling and support (legal, social, psychological, reintegration, voluntary return, etc.), funded by public and private sources.
- Support victims in accessing justice.
- Analyse and reflect on reality, monitor regulations and their implementation, and formulate proposals and recommendations for improvement.

Collaboration between specialised entities and security forces in the context of the airport



Detection at the airport: difficulties and challenges



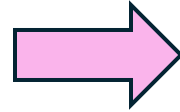
THB Scenarios and Situations at the Airport

Scenarios	THB Situations
Travellers arriving from the EU will not encounter any internal borders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People destined to be exploited in Spain.• People already exploited in other countries and transferred to Spain to continue their exploitation.
Travellers arriving from third countries cross the border.	*Travelling alone or accompanied by traffickers.
Travellers in transit to other countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transferred to continue their exploitation elsewhere.
People seeking asylum at the airport upon arrival in Spain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are fleeing exploitation or persecution.• They seek help upon arrival.• Sometimes they do so on the instructions of traffickers.
Returns under the Dublin Convention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People exploited in other Schengen countries returned to Spain.
People travelling from Spain to other countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transferred by traffickers to continue being exploited.• Or who escape and use the airport to flee or return to their country.

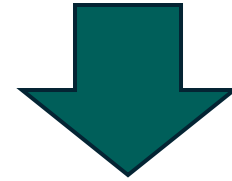
Functions of the security forces operating at the airport

National Police

- ❖ Border control
- ❖ Security
- ❖ Asylum application management



Detection of possible signs of THB
+ Referral

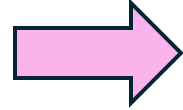


THB specialised National Police group –THB Brigade:
Present at airport*, intervenes and activates the collaboration with the specialized entity on duty at the airport.

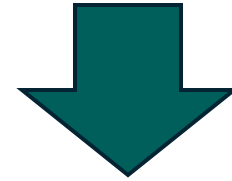
Functions of the security forces operating at the airport

Civil Guard

- ❖ Customs
- ❖ Aircraft control
- ❖ Icaro Group



Detection of possible signs of TSH + Referral



- *Grupo Ícaro, specialised team focusing on detecting potential criminals + *potential THB Victims through behavioral analysis + THB specialised Civil Guard Units: UCO + UTPJ intervene and activates the collaboration with the specialized entity

Collaboration: Framework Protocol + Instruction 6/2016 at Border

Improve operational coordination and information exchange between police forces and specialized NGOs:

- ✓ National and Regional Social Interlocutors serve as official contact points to ensure permanent communication.

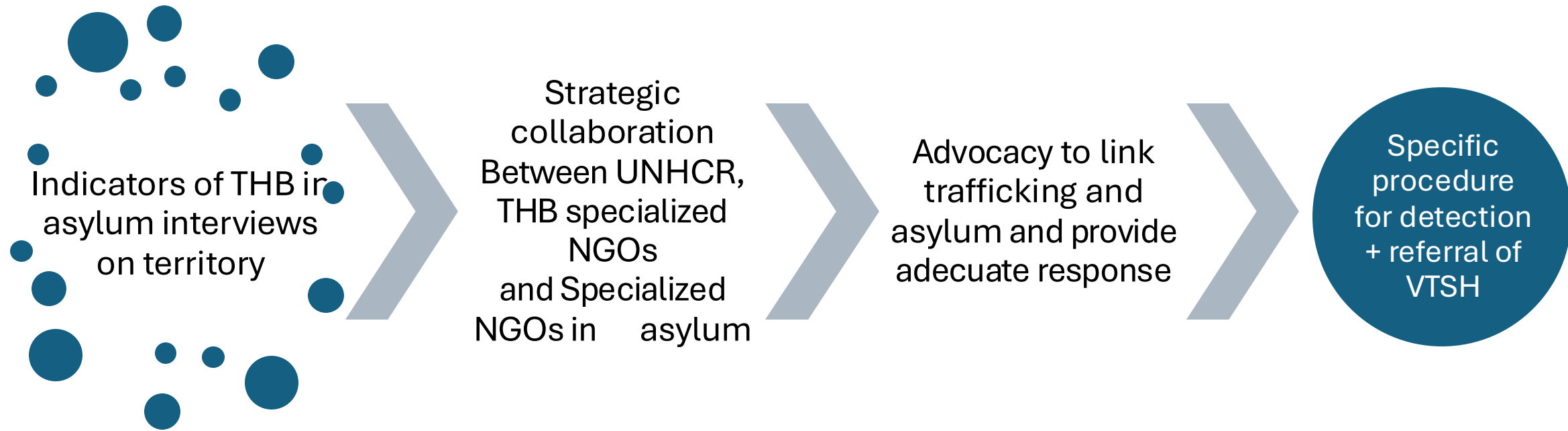
Ensure early detection and the activation of protection mechanisms without delay when there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that a person is a VTHB, police units shall take the necessary measures to:

- ✓ Ensure that NGOs can actively collaborate in the process of formal identification, assessment and referral of cases and provide information and specialized assistance: adequate accommodation, medical and social assistance, and legal support.

Steps:

- Formal identification **interview** conducted with the collaboration of specialized entity.
- Issuance of **police decision on the identification** + Specialized NGO can also issue a report on THB indicators and the personal situation of the victim.
- Government delegation decides whether or not to grant a **Reflection Period**.
- Specialized NGO offers **resources and support**.

Evolution of collaboration between NGO's and law enforcement the context of asylum at the border in practice



Barajas procedure: Objectives

1. Ensure that signs of trafficking are detected and needs and risks are assessed in cases of asylum applications in Barajas, so that those affected can be referred to an appropriate reception centre in the asylum system.
2. Ensure that entities specialising in human trafficking (THB) have access to restricted areas where applicants are located, so they can assess cases, issue reports on indications of THB and make specific intervention and referral proposals, coordinating with all actors involved.
3. Ensure the parallel implementation of the formal identification process set out in the framework protocol for the protection of victims of trafficking.

Barajas procedure- International Protection context at airport

Detection + Notification

- If signs of trafficking appear, during IP proceeding, the Barajas Procedure is activated and relevant authorities are alerted.
- Asylum Police, Asylum Office, UNHCR and NGO staff working in humanitarian aid or asylum (CEAR, Red Cross) can activate the procedure and alert Police if they detect possible THB signs.

Interview + Assessment

- Specialized NGOs (Foundation Amaranta, APRAMP, Diaconía, Foundation White Cross) enter the airport: interview potential victims, assess indicators and evaluate needs
- Issue a report with conclusions and proposed actions.

Decision + Referral

- Asylum Office reviews NGO report, decides on whether to accept a case for IP.
- M. Migration assigns most suitable protection resource according with proposal of Specialized NGO + consent of VTHB.
- NGO staff inform the person of his/her rights and support options within IP Programme, including specialized spaces for trafficking victims.
- The person is admitted to the country and accompanied to the safe facility.

Impact and good practices

1. Strengthened Collaboration and Advocacy

- Close collaboration between trafficking-specialized NGOs, asylum NGOs, and UNHCR.
- Joint advocacy to improve detection of potential victims of trafficking at the border and during IP procedures.
- Reinforced assistance and protection measures for potential victims within the IP system.

2. Increased Police Involvement and Presence

- Active involvement of the police in applying the Framework Protocol at the airport (previously absent).
- Permanent police presence, enabling intervention in all trafficking-related cases, not only asylum cases.
- Stronger early detection, coordination, and immediate protection.

3. Development of the Barajas Procedure

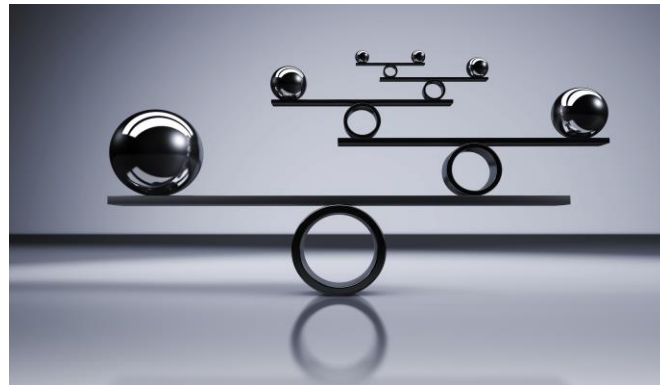
- Creation and implementation of the Barajas Procedure as a pilot project.
- Provides a structured, coordinated, and victim-centred protocol for addressing trafficking indicators at the airport.

4. Capacity-Building and Training

- Training for Asylum Office staff through collaboration between UNHCR and the FSA.
- Training for Border Police and Civil Guard at Madrid airport to improve identification of trafficking indicators and appropriate responses.
- Ensures frontline actors share aligned tools, understanding, and approaches.

Challenge

How to coordinate all this systematized work with the **EU Pact on Migration and Asylum's** commitments and responsibilities regarding triage and detection at the border of particularly vulnerable persons (June 2026)



CASES

Case 1- VTHB in Transit in Spain

- 26-year-old woman, national of Zimbabwe in vulnerable situation.
- Recruited by a man and trafficked for sexual exploitation and exploitation in criminal activities through different countries for 9 years.
- During one of her transfers to Colombia, she stopped over in Spain and asked the border police for help.
- Border police referred the case to THB specialized police.
- Framework Protocol was activated and FSA, as specialized organization, attended identification interview with specialized THB police.
- The woman was identified as VTHB and granted Recovery & Reflection Period as VTHB.
- Non punishment clause was applied.
- She accepted comprehensive support offered by our organization and entered the shelter to be assisted in her recovery process.

Case 2 - VTHB to Spain

- 22-year-old Paraguayan woman, two children in her country and unemployed.
- Family member offers her the possibility to travel to Spain and earn a lot of money working as an escort. Takes care of all expenses and arrangements for the trip. They agree she will pay back when she starts working, amount of debt is not specified.
- Upon arrival at Madrid airport, the Civil Guard's Ícaro group detects something strange in the young woman's behavior and story and contacts our organization.
- FSA interviews the woman, warning her of the dangers she may face if she continues her trip, but she trusts her family member and decides to continue her journey.
- FSA provides information + 24h hotline number and Icaro Group -Civil Guard also provides contact information.
- Soon upon arriving at her destination, the young woman realizes that she has been deceived, the promised conditions are not real, she faces exploitation and abuse.
- Woman contacts FSA through our 24h hotline WhatsApp channel asking for help.
- FSA coordinates with the Civil Guard to help her escape.
- She enters the shelter and recovery programme.

Case 3 - VTHB to Spain + Asylum seeker

- 22-year-old woman from Cameroon. At the age of 17, she was forced by her father to marry against her will.
- To escape from the forced marriage, a man offered her help to travel to Europe and work as a hairdresser. She agreed and the man did all the arrangements for the trip: passport, purchase of the plane ticket, accompanying her on the journey.
- Upon arrival at the airport, the man tells her to act as if she does not know him at all and to apply for international protection telling about the forced marriage.
- The woman requests IP at the airport. The Asylum and Refuge Office considers she has been victim for gender based violence but also detects signs of trafficking (extremely nervous, contradictions, gaps in the account of events) and reports the case to the specialized police.
- The Framework Protocol, as well as the Barajas Proceeding was activated to identify whether there were signs of THB. FSA assist as specialized organization. Police does not identify her as victim of THB.
- The Asylum and Refuge Office accepts her application for IP considering signs GBV and also possible indications of trafficking based on the asylum interview and the FSA report.
- FSA offers her comprehensive support at our specialized shelter for Asylum seekers with THB indicators.

Case 4 -VTHB exploited in Spain and transferred by the trafficker to another EU country.

- A 24-year-old Colombian woman.
- Was trafficked and exploited in Spain.
- The trafficker takes her to the airport to transfer her to another EU country to continue the exploitation there.
- At the airport, the woman manages to escape from the trafficker's control and asks for help at the airport police station.
- The police station contacts the specialized THB police, who activates the Framework Protocol and Instruction 6/2016
- The woman decides to cooperate with the police by filing a complaint against the trafficker.
- FSA is present through the identification process and the filing of the complaint and offers comprehensive support. Woman enters the shelter and the recovery Programme.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION