

Foreword

My first year in office has provided me with the opportunity to establish a *Platform for Action* through dialogue, by sharing experiences and information with public and civil actors and decision makers in the participating States. All major national and international partners against trafficking in human beings have been joining efforts to step up actions and implement OSCE commitments and recommendations in more efficient ways. Through advocacy, in bilateral meetings with government and other political decision makers, in media and through concerted efforts to support and assist participating States I believe we have made progress.

The political profile of the OSCE and our commitment to end the scourge of trafficking as one inherent part of our work for comprehensive security in our region is widely recognized and has continued to rise. States are realizing their obligations to meet international standards and are taking practical action on the ground. The need to accelerate common efforts is not contested. We have worked with the media to ensure that accurate and more profound messages reach the public. We have encouraged investigating journalism to reveal complex root causes and markets of demand, and to show the cruelty that is taking place in our societies against other human beings. NGOs and civil society groups are being consulted and involved in all of our efforts. We have stressed the importance of involving also new stakeholders, such as private companies, and showed successful practices. We have proved that trafficking victims must be heard and incorporated into the policy-making process whenever possible, to reach better results.

I have worked hard to ensure that national authorities understand their responsibility to take action against trafficking, establish effective co-ordination and reporting mechanisms, and start responding better to the need for accurate data on trafficking in human beings. The problems of child trafficking, and the pressing need to ensure *ALL* forms of trafficking are responded to, have been high on my agenda. Identification of victims and their effective protection continued to be burning issues throughout 2007. Finally, it is my strongly held conviction that the *prevention* of trafficking remains a top priority. This means more than simply awareness raising. It means taking a long and hard look at the root causes of the problem at national, regional and global levels. It means being prepared to influence and change the structural factors which enable exploitation in the 21st century. I intend to develop this work in 2008 and build on the *Platform for Action* established this year.

I wish to acknowledge the support and contributions of the Governments and delegations of the participating States; the Spanish OSCE Chairmanship, the Secretary General, the OSCE executive structures, including ODIHR and field operations of the OSCE, and the members of the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons*; In particular I extend my thanks to all dedicated and highly professional staff and interns in my Office who have worked tirelessly to support my work.



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