



## FOREWORD

This is my third and final Annual Report in my capacity as the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Three years ago, I established the Platform for Action as the framework for my work. This report provides a reflection on that framework, on our achievements and activities. I can confidently say that there has been tremendous progress in the anti-trafficking arena. At the same time, I have also seen many gaps and recognize many challenges that still remain.

The strength of the OSCE is that it is able to work across the broad spectrum of the security agenda. Trafficking in human beings is first of all a threat to the security of an individual. Additionally, it threatens the fundamental structures in society that our well-being and development are built on. The OSCE's constructive and comprehensive approach has made it a true frontrunner in fighting trafficking in human beings. The fact that there has been a Ministerial Council Decision on human trafficking every year from 2000 to 2008 is testimony to the importance given by the participating States to combating trafficking. I can truly say that the Ministerial Council Decisions have served as the backbone of the SR's engagement and the building blocks upon which the work of my Office rests.

It has been a privilege to work in the unique position of SR, having had the opportunity to engage in high-level dialogue with decision makers and policymakers in OSCE participating States, and to engage with hands-on, grass root actors of civil society. One of the strengths of the SR is the role of a facilitator for co-operation and sharing of information between various actors, and bringing together international experts and activists alike. The creation of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons in 2004 and its maintenance over the years is, I believe, a major achievement in terms of co-operation throughout the international community. I do hope that the Alliance will be further developed and strengthened. I am convinced that my engagement and the engagement of all of the OSCE's anti-trafficking structures and officials have raised the overall profile of the whole OSCE and increased the general awareness of the important work carried out by this noble Organization.

To become a true priority, trafficking must first of all be placed high on the political agenda in all our participating States. Secondly, we need more systematic efforts to fight this crime. So far, many of our efforts have been too ad-hoc and too short-term. There are many encouraging signs that countries are starting to build up systematic approaches and strengthening the long-term national structures and strategies. The basic instruments in this regard, besides the legal framework, are National Co-ordination Mechanisms, National Action Plans and National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, which I have continuously been advocating for. Finally, adequate resources must be committed to this work. The funds and efforts put into fighting trafficking must be in proportion to the funds and efforts put into responses to other, equally serious threats of our time.

We all need to actively search and find the tipping point where the tide turns and trafficking is no longer a lucrative and low risk business. We must stop tolerating the wasting of human lives. It is my hope that

fighting trafficking in human beings will continue to remain one of the key priorities of this organization until we can confidently say that trafficking has been eradicated from this world.

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the Governments and delegations of the OSCE participating States for all their support, contributions and commitment to my work. I want to extend my cordial thanks to the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, as well as the previous Chairmanships of Belgium in 2006, Spain in 2007 and Finland in 2008. My sincere wishes of success go to the forthcoming Kazakh Chairmanship, which, as it has stated, will include the fight against trafficking in human beings as one of its priorities. My thanks also go to the OSCE Secretary General and the OSCE executive structures, especially the ODIHR and the field operations, as well as the members of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons.

My warmest, heartfelt thanks go to all the highly professional, dedicated and conscientious staff in my Office, who have worked tirelessly and diligently to support my mission these past three years. Without their efforts and backing, my work could not have been successful. Their expertise has been invaluable not only to me, but also to the whole organization in positioning the OSCE at the forefront of the international work to end modern-day slavery.

Lastly, I want to thank the numerous interns who have offered their time, dedication and idealism to support our important work.



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