



**Seminar on Co-operation to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the
Mediterranean Region, 8 February 2013, Rome**

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Opening Remarks

Dear Minister,

Dear Chairperson of the Permanent Council

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the distinguished government and civil society representatives from the Mediterranean region, as well as other partner organizations, attending this important Seminar on Co-operation to prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region. And, of course, I wholeheartedly thank the Italian Government for the initiative and the Presidents of the Italian Parliament and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for hosting us in these historic premises.

I personally strongly support the Ukrainian Chairmanship's efforts to advance the dialogue with our Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, as well as its strong commitment to further OSCE's response against the plague of human trafficking.

The 2011 Vilnius Ministerial decision on Partners mandated the OSCE to pursue a more result oriented and demand driven Partnership. To this end, I have closely consulted with the Mediterranean Partners throughout 2012 to select areas of mutual interest where we could actively co-operate. Combating trafficking in human beings is among these areas and I am thankful to the OSCE Special Representative for the work done to prepare today's seminar.

A number of similar initiatives will follow in the course of this year: a Regional Workshop on the Implementation of Universal Antiterrorism Instruments will take place in Malaga, in September 2013, and preparations are being made for an experts' event on Sustainable Energy as well as for a second meeting on environmental challenges to security, also known as "Valencia Follow-up", in the Spring.

We are also working on bilateral initiatives with individual Partners, upon their requests: ODIHR is engaging with Tunisia on supporting democratic reforms and as we see on the news, this engagement is even more crucial today; our Gender Section, together with ODIHR, is exploring ways to support women's empowerment in Morocco and; the Transnational Threats Department is preparing a number of activities on anti-terrorism, policing and borders' management with Algeria.

With all these initiatives, we aim at sharing the OSCE experience, but we also want to pursue concrete results. The substantial agenda we have in front of us today seems to go in the right direction.

In this regard, I would also like to point out that the contribution that the civil society can bring to the OSCE dialogue in the Mediterranean is extremely relevant. Hence, I sincerely welcome the proposal put forward by Italy to

establish and sponsor a Focal Point in the OSCE Secretariat in charge of actively promoting a network of think-tanks and NGOs focusing on OSCE issues in the Mediterranean region. I believe that such network would contribute to injecting new ideas and momentum to our Partnership.

The fight against trafficking in Human Beings plays an important role in this Partnership and, more broadly, in the OSCE's efforts to build a Security Community based on trust, dialogue and partnership among States and their civil society.

The phenomenon of trafficking is extremely complicated and multifaceted. Nevertheless, the very essence of the OSCE approach to human trafficking can be summarized in a few words: it is human rights based and comprehensive. Hence, it addresses human trafficking for all forms of exploitation as a gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and, furthermore, as a serious crime that evolved into a global transnational threat.

The fight against human trafficking continues to represent a challenge, both at the national level and throughout the OSCE region, in terms of adequate victims' rights protection, effective prosecution and sustainable prevention. It has been widely acknowledged that if the fight against human trafficking is to be effective, it cannot stop at national or regional borders. Global threats require global responses.

I am convinced that today's Seminar will not only contribute to shedding light on the dynamics involved in these mixed migration flows, but also to opening up new perspectives on how we can more effectively co-operate with our Mediterranean Partners to prevent and combat human trafficking in the region.

The OSCE has developed extensive expertise in the fight against human trafficking which we are glad to share with our Partners. This includes our Action Plan and commitments, as well as comprehensive concepts and practical tools such as the National Referral Mechanism.

It is in this spirit of open dialogue, shared responsibility and a vision for a better future for those we are responsible to protect, that this Seminar is taking place today here in Rome.

Dear Maria Grazia, I have no doubt that under your expertise the discussions at this Seminar are in excellent hands. I look forward to developing and implementing follow-up ideas to this seminar jointly with your Office, the Mediterranean Partners and all interested participating States, including within the framework of the Mediterranean Contact Group.

As repeatedly announced, my door remains wide open to dialogue with, and ideas from, the Mediterranean Partners for concrete co-operation, both bilaterally and as a group.

Last December in Dublin participating States reaffirmed their commitment to the concept of comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security based on OSCE commitments and agreed to engage in the Helsinki+40 process. Against this background, a stronger and genuine engagement with our Partners for Co-operation - including in the fight against human trafficking - will be instrumental to bringing this process forward. Thank you.