



**OSCE Conference on Successful Prosecution of Human Trafficking –
Challenges and Good Practices**

Helsinki, 10-11 September 2008

**Closing remarks by Mr. Pertti Torstila, Secretary of State, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of
Finland, Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank all panellists and keynote speakers for their well prepared and thought-provoking interventions as well as all participants in the Conference for their active participation. I would also like to thank our moderators under whose professional guidance the discussions have taken place.

OSCE participating States remain seriously concerned that human trafficking is widespread in the OSCE region and beyond. There is a broad range of OSCE commitments on combating trafficking in human beings. However, as was noted during this Conference, more efforts to turn these commitments into real actions are needed. The aim of the Conference set by the Office of the Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Finnish Chairmanship was to enhance an exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices to help find ways to ensure that traffickers can no more operate with impunity and that victims are ensured an easy access to justice and protection. The Conference has succeeded in meeting this goal.

During these two days we have had lively discussions and a good opportunity to network in order to contribute to the need of intensifying international co-operation and providing experts pragmatic tools for their work. It has also been emphasized that the work of NGOs and other civil society actors complements the action of national and international authorities. These grassroots actors are usually the ones who have easy access to victims and can provide them immediate assistance. We should not underestimate their work.

It is clear that an efficient investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases must have a victim-centred approach. Victims can provide adequate and truthful information for prosecution. They can do this only when they feel safe and their rights are fully ensured. We have heard during the conference concrete examples of victim assistance and protection before, during and after court proceedings. The participating States should increase their efforts in integrating a victim-centred approach in combating trafficking.

National responses are solely not enough. To eradicate human trafficking international co-operation as well as more targeted co-operation between countries of origin, transit and destination need to be further strengthened and developed. The participating States should make full use of the support

provided by OSCE institutions and structures, in particular the Office of the Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as other international mechanisms to address effectively human trafficking.

I hope each and every one of you will return home with new ideas and new contact networks that will take us one more step towards the eradication of trafficking. The Finnish Chairmanship has carefully listened to the different recommendations and suggestions made during the Conference and will consider how to best proceed the important work of fighting trafficking.

Let me conclude by expressing the Finnish Chairmanship's sincere gratitude to the Special Representative, Ms. Eva Biaudet, and her Office for their professionalism and dedication in their very important work. Finally, I would also like to thank our professional interpreters and technical staff without whom this conference would not have been possible.

Thank you.