



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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Opening Remarks

15th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons conference
“People at risk: combating human trafficking along migration routes”

To be checked against delivery!

*Vienna,
6 July 2015*

State Secretary,
Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Alliance Partners,

I would like to join the previous speakers and again warmly welcome you to our 15th *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* Conference.

In particular, I would like to thank each one of our prominent guests for accepting my invitation. Your presence today proves that the international community stands united in confronting human trafficking along migration routes, and that the OSCE continues to serve as a dedicated platform for enhanced dialogue and joint action.

At the very outset, I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE for placing the issue of combating trafficking in human beings (THB) high on their agenda, as well as our Secretary General Lamberto Zannier for his continuous support and wise advice. I am proud to belong to the OSCE family, and I am delighted to work hand in hand with you and our *Alliance* partners in our daily struggle against modern-day slavery.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all the delegates and experts from the 57 OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia attending today. I look forward to your constructive engagement, both in person and via web-streaming and Twitter/Facebook. We have successfully integrated social media into our work, allowing this *Alliance* conference and our dialogue to become more global and interactive!

Human trafficking is increasingly entangled with vulnerabilities deriving from migration processes. On the one hand, tightening of migration policies has contributed to an increasing number of would-be migrants looking for alternative means to reach their destination. On the other hand, the demand for cheap labour has continued to rise, fueling the mass movement of vulnerable people.

This year's conference will therefore draw attention to the potential impact of state migration policies on THB, as well as to the particular vulnerability of certain migrant profiles, including those fleeing crisis situations and unaccompanied minors. Against this backdrop, a key question to address is: how can we better identify and protect victims of trafficking along migration routes?

Building on other OSCE efforts in the field of migration and human trafficking, I am confident that our deliberations will inspire more concerted action when addressing human trafficking in the context of migration. Ultimately, our goal is to promote a co-ordinated response by all relevant

actors to the challenges posed by “mixed migration flows” in the OSCE region, thereby contributing to improving human security for all.

Your Excellencies,

Together with our *Alliance* partners, we decided to focus this year’s high-level conference on “People at risk: combating human trafficking along migration routes” being well aware of the need to better explore the nexus between THB and migration. In particular, it is paramount to understand how the two phenomena relate to each other and how they influence one another.

Nowadays, human beings move in regular and irregular conditions, either on a voluntary or involuntary basis. These “mixed migration flows” are comprised of economic migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees who are often highly vulnerable, and increasingly at risk of being trafficked before, during and after their migration process.

Our gathering takes place against the backdrop of serious crises affecting the security and well-being of millions of people in and around the OSCE region. The recent tragedies in the Mediterranean speak very much for themselves: so far this year, approximately 1,800 people have perished trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, the situation in and around Ukraine is of great concern and I am devoting special attention to combating THB in that context. Additionally, people continue to be forcibly displaced by floods, droughts, and other natural and man-made disasters.

Uprooted persons are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in human beings, including for the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation, organ removal, forced criminality, forced conscription and child soldiering. Crises within and surrounding the OSCE area therefore call for effective management of mixed migration flows in order to ensure the rights of potential, presumed and actual victims of trafficking. In particular, I remain convinced that the OSCE - as the largest regional security organization in the world - can add significant value in addressing the impact of crisis and conflicts on human trafficking.

That said, there is still too much confusion between migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the media; though this may reflect the reality that smuggled migrants are indeed vulnerable to human traffickers along their migration routes. In recent years, the migration routes have become longer, more difficult, expensive and risky. As a result, migration has become progressively more fragmented, often involving numerous stopovers. In such scenarios, the shift from a situation of migration to a situation of trafficking can easily occur, with migrants and asylum seekers likely to be subjected to debt bondage and exploitation. Of course, children are among the most vulnerable.

Moreover, traffickers exploit the vulnerability of those on the move in countries of destination, where the migrants and refugees may be sanctioned and expelled for irregular border crossings and other crimes they have committed as a consequence of being trafficked. The traffickers often threaten to report these victims, or use other means of coercion to ensure that they remain under their control.

While I continue to advocate for the unconditional implementation of the non-punishment principle, this climate of exploitation highlights the need to create more opportunities for safe and legal migration, including for those entitled to international protection.

Ladies and gentlemen,

By addressing the relationship between human trafficking and migration, the 2015 *Alliance* conference provides a privileged forum for dialogue between representatives from countries of origin, transit and destination of trafficked migrants and refugees. Moreover, it offers an opportunity to explore how to close the policy gaps in order to prevent human trafficking and protect vulnerable groups along migration routes as well as in destination countries.

The OSCE commitments in this field are numerous and all of them are based on a human rights-centred approach, which has always been at the heart of the OSCE's anti-trafficking efforts.

Inter alia, the OSCE *Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings* calls on participating States to raise awareness about trafficking among immigration authorities and consular and diplomatic personnel, as well as among vulnerable groups, including migrants and IDPs. This is why I have repeatedly visited Ukraine in order to engage with national and sub-regional actors, IDPs, and partner organizations in raising awareness and promoting co-ordinated anti-trafficking efforts in co-operation with our missions on the ground. In this framework, we have already trained around 100 OSCE monitors and we intend to build the capacities of local authorities in Dnepropetrovsk, an area hosting one of the largest IDP communities. Another example of our work in this regard is the 2014 Handbook for Protocol Departments of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, which has proven to be a useful tool for preventing human trafficking for domestic servitude in diplomatic households, detecting exploitative practices and protecting the rights of domestic migrant workers. Notably, several participating States have announced initiatives in this field and are improving their procedures.

The *Action Plan* also recommends that countries of origin work to promote socio-economic and political stability, and prevent trafficking by addressing demand for cheap labour. In addition, countries of destination are called upon to tackle unprotected, informal and often illegal labour in

order to improve the possibilities of regular migration and adequate protection of migrant workers' rights. In this context, I would like to highlight our efforts to ensure that both governments and the private sector do not contribute to exploitation in their supply chains and workplaces, which often leads to human trafficking and other human rights violations. This initiative includes a recent publication on outlining the measures that governments and businesses can take to promote ethical sourcing, and it provides a series of useful recommendations for OSCE participating States. We are also planning to organize an expert workshop on this topic in September.

According to the 2013 *Addendum* to the OSCE Action Plan, participating States are required to pay special attention to unaccompanied and separated children, child asylum-seekers, refugees and IDPs, and children left behind by migrating parents. I personally took stock of the achievements made by the OSCE project on preventing human trafficking in children without parental care in Moldova, where since 2012 we have assisted more than 970 vulnerable children, and trained 33 social workers, psychologists and teachers on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru river. *Inter alia*, the project has been instrumental in bridging the divide between experts and specialists living on opposite sides of the river. Moreover, I continue to advocate for the implementation of the "best interests of the child" principle and pay special attention to the most vulnerable groups during all my country visits. This year I already visited the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Tajikistan. I also conducted a follow-up visit to Azerbaijan, and I plan to visit Turkey this autumn.

Finally participating States are reminded to engage with relevant institutions to promote the identification of trafficked persons among migrants, including asylum seekers, as well as the protection of their rights. In this context, we continue to build the capacities of criminal justice practitioners and border guards in the OSCE region by engaging in relevant training and expert seminars, including the second OSCE-Council of Europe workshop for judges and prosecutors in Strasbourg, and the FRONTEX trainings for border guards. Later this year we will also contribute to a regional IOM-OSCE-UNODC workshop in South-Eastern Europe focusing on irregular migration and human trafficking. I am also exploring the possibility of organizing an innovative capacity building exercise focusing on improving victim identification and criminal justice responses. The idea behind this initiative is to "learn-by-doing", as participants will be expected to act upon realistic scenarios, tailored for different groups of beneficiaries, within a common simulation exercise.

Talking about OSCE commitments, I would like to seize this opportunity to announce that we are launching a survey of the 57 participating States to better understand the gaps in implementation of the OSCE anti-trafficking commitments. The survey will focus on priority areas of our work,

including the prevention of trafficking for labour exploitation and child trafficking, the identification and protection of THB victims, as well as the seizure of assets in the investigation phase. Conscious of the need to avoid duplication with our international partners, we have joined forces with the Council of Europe and United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to focus on the areas which are not yet fully covered by existing data collection efforts.

Dear participants,

Moving to our conference programme, today's **introductory panel** will establish the thematic foundation for the discussions during the next two days and explore how *Alliance* partners should co-operate effectively to prevent human trafficking, prosecute the criminals and protect THB victims along migration routes. After the presentations of our high-level guests I will open the discussion, which I expect to be interesting and constructive. Once we conclude, it is my honour to invite you to a reception just outside this room.

Tomorrow, in the **first thematic panel**, speakers will underline how mixed migration flows pose serious challenges for States in today's globalized world. Discussion will focus on how States can design policies which, on the one hand, comprehensively approach migration management, including targeting organized criminal networks and unscrupulous employers, while at the same time protecting the human rights of migrants and promoting safe migration options to prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking.

As the OSCE region is increasingly affected by massive and widely uncontrolled movements of people fleeing from conflict, persecution and natural disasters, the speakers in **panel II** will explore how large numbers of forcibly uprooted people create a facilitating environment for human trafficking for various exploitative purposes. Against this backdrop, the proper reception, identification and protection of displaced persons and asylum-seekers is critical to preventing and combating human trafficking in situations of crisis-driven migration.

Unfortunately, the number of 'unaccompanied minors' has also been increasing. Some of them are victims of trafficking already when their migration process begins; others become victims in the course of their "journey". While children are always at-risk of being trafficked, the lack of protection and respect for their rights in countries of origin, transit and destination further increases their vulnerability to being exploited. Speakers in **panel III** will therefore focus on how to reduce this vulnerability at all stages of their migration process, highlighting best practices and lessons learned.

As in the previous years, we will also hold two **side-events** during tomorrow's extended lunch break. The first side-event - jointly organized with the Office of the Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) - will focus on the *broader impact of migration on security in the OSCE region*. This gathering will offer the *Alliance's* audience the opportunity to better understand the OSCE's approach to migration and explore how our Organization can add value and complement the work of other leading organizations in this field.

The second side-event will instead focus on *preventing human trafficking among institutionalized children*. As the specific needs of children are very dear to me, I decided to devote a targeted discussion (in Russian) to reduce the vulnerability of children without parental care to the risk of being trafficked from State boarding schools or orphanages, or after leaving them.

To conclude, I am confident that this *Alliance* conference will provide an excellent opportunity to gather expertise, exchange good practices and enhance dialogue between relevant national authorities and other stakeholders in the OSCE region. Our discussion should be geared towards the development of realistic recommendations on what else can be done to prevent and tackle human trafficking along migration routes.

Rest assured that I will work tirelessly with the OSCE community, NGOs, academia, and all our partners in the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* to promote the OSCE's human rights-based approach. But we all need to redouble our efforts in confronting this growing security challenge and protecting the rights of millions of vulnerable people, especially those of migrants and trafficked persons.

Thank you!