

Second day of the Eighteenth Meeting
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MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON COMBATING ALL FORMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

I.

1. We, the members of the Ministerial Council of the OSCE, declare our strong and unwavering determination to combat human trafficking in all its forms.
2. We declare that human trafficking is a grave and heinous crime that violates human dignity and undermines human rights and fundamental freedoms and that feeds organized criminal networks.
3. We remain fully committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”
4. We reiterate the support of the participating States for the ratification and full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementing Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, as the international framework to combat trafficking in persons. Furthermore, we stress the importance of the adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action (GA 64/293) to Combat Trafficking in Persons that fosters enhanced co-operation and co-ordination among all relevant stakeholders and promotes comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses at the national, regional, and international levels to counter trafficking in human beings, and welcome OSCE efforts towards its implementation.
5. We recognize the progress achieved to date by OSCE participating States individually and collectively to address this heinous crime. We recall our full adherence to the OSCE’s commitment to combating human trafficking and our strong resolve to implement that commitment through a multidimensional approach, as set forth in various OSCE documents, including Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/08 adopted in Helsinki in 2008, Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/07 adopted in Madrid in 2007, Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/06 adopted in Brussels in 2006, and Permanent Council Decision No. 557/Rev.1 on the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings adopted in 2003.

1 Incorporates a correction to the text.

6. We express grave concern that despite sustained measures taken at the international, regional, and national levels, trafficking remains a serious problem, the number of victims of human trafficking which have been identified and assisted remains relatively low and few traffickers have been brought to justice. We are deeply concerned that human trafficking for the removal of organs, for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as for the purpose of labour exploitation, including domestic servitude, remains a serious problem.

7. We acknowledge with appreciation the important role of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in assisting participating States, upon their request, in the implementation of the OSCE anti-trafficking commitments. We value the Special Representative's close co-operation, in a co-ordinating role, with OSCE executive structures, in full respect with their mandates, including with the OCEEA; the Gender Section; the ODIHR including the Anti-Trafficking Programme unit and the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues; and with the Chairmanship-in-Office's Special Representative on Gender Issues, as well as, where appropriate, with the OSCE field operations. In the spirit of the Astana Commemorative Declaration, we appreciate the cooperation with parliamentarians of the participating States on combating human trafficking. In particular, we commend recent efforts by the OSCE to highlight trafficking for labour exploitation, including domestic servitude, as well as child trafficking and trafficking in persons for the removal of organs.

8. We promote and support multidisciplinary co-operation, cross-sectoral training and multilateral partnerships. We commend the initiatives taken by the OSCE Special Representative under the auspices of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons and take note of the 2010 Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference on Unprotected Work, Invisible Exploitation: Trafficking for the Purpose of Domestic Servitude; as well as the 2011 Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference on Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation: Decent Work and Social Justice; and Joint OSCE/UNODC Expert Seminar on Leveraging Anti-Money Laundering Regimes to Combat Human Trafficking.

II.

9. We recognize the need to enhance the criminal justice responses to human trafficking, including the prosecution of traffickers and their accomplices, while ensuring that victims are treated in a manner that respects their human rights and that they are provided with access to justice, to legal assistance, and to effective remedies and other services as applicable. We will explore investigative techniques such as financial investigations, improve information sharing relating to organized crime groups, and promote cross-border law-enforcement and judicial collaboration to identify effectively both traffickers and potential victims of human trafficking.

10. We recognize that adequate measures should be taken to ensure that, where appropriate, identified victims of human trafficking are not penalized for their involvement in unlawful activities to the extent that they have been compelled to do so. We urge participating States to implement comprehensive and appropriate measures on assistance to victims of trafficking in persons.

11. We will renew efforts to identify and assist victims of human trafficking taking into account especially vulnerable populations. As applicable, we will promote awareness-raising campaigns aimed at persons at risk of being trafficked and addressing the social, economic, cultural, political, and other factors that contribute to the vulnerability of being trafficked. We will increase and support prevention efforts by focusing on the demand that fosters all forms of trafficking and the goods and services that result from trafficking in persons.

12. We acknowledge the important role of civil society organizations in providing assistance and empowerment to victims of trafficking in persons.

13. We acknowledge that child protection systems need to be strengthened in order effectively to help prevent, identify, and respond to child trafficking in all its forms to provide appropriate assistance and protection in the best interest of the child to child victims of trafficking or those at risk of being trafficked, including through appropriate services and measures for the physical and psychological well-being as well as for their education, rehabilitation and reintegration.

14. We acknowledge that, in order to prevent trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation effectively, labour rights must be respected. We recommend the development and application of measures to improve labour practices and promote the effective enforcement of internationally recognized labour rights, by means such as labour inspections, monitoring of private employment agencies, and the development of other programs to support workers in exercising their labour rights.

15. We encourage participating States to work with the business sector to apply principles of due diligence and transparency in assessing and addressing risks of exploitation throughout supply chains and ensuring that workers have access to mechanisms for the redress and remedy of abusive practices. We encourage the dissemination and implementation of the newly adopted United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Similarly, we encourage governments to consider incorporating similar standards, including “zero-tolerance” policies, in government procurement of goods and services.

III.

16. We underscore that the OSCE provides a highly valuable platform for dialogue and enhanced co-operation among participating States for a comprehensive response to human trafficking in all its forms. With this in mind, we reaffirm our determination to implement OSCE commitments, including the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, to use relevant structures of the OSCE to the full, and to strengthen the OSCE’s partnership with other international and regional organizations, as well as with civil society.