

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, 10-21 September 2018

NATIONAL STATEMENT OF GREECE

Working Session 14

The legal, political and operational strategic framework to combat trafficking in human beings in Greece endorses a comprehensive, cross-dimensional and multidisciplinary approach. In this spirit Greece would like to commend OSCE and the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating THB for promoting a partnership outlook that encompasses transnational, coordinated, interdisciplinary actions against human trafficking. At the same time we are equally inspired by the OSCE's emphasis on the Human Dimension in searching path-breaking solutions to alleviate human suffering and uphold law enforcement. Last but not least Greece fully subscribes to the OSCEs solid commitment to the promotion of human rights, including gender equality, child protection and the human security of migrants and refugees.

Complying with European and international commitments, Greece has developed a comprehensive law enforcement and victim-centred framework to prevent and combat human trafficking. Top priorities include protecting and reintegrating the victims through human rights, and a gender and age-specific identification regime. During 2017 and 2018, Greek anti trafficking activities **focused on** the operational procedures of the National Referral Mechanism, on enhancing the identification of victims in mixed migration flows, on the protection of vulnerable populations, including Roma, migrants and asylum seekers, on the protection of minors including unaccompanied minors and children on the move, on tackling human trafficking for forced labour purposes especially through promoting public-private partnerships, on capacity building of a broad range of competent professionals and on promoting collaboration with international partners, locally, regionally and internationally. Taking the aforementioned priorities into consideration, the new **National Action Plan** for the period 2018-2022, is currently assessed in the Parliament.

Ms/Mr Moderator,

We would like to make special reference to some of the abovementioned fields of action:

From January to August 2018, Greece received nearly 21.000 migrants and asylum seekers (23% increase comparing with the same time-period in 2017). **Tackling human trafficking in such a large and variable population is a challenge.** The Greek Authorities have taken a number of initiatives to respond effectively to this challenge. The National Referral Mechanism will soon become fully operational. The NRM stipulates specific SOPs for the First Reception and Identification Centres (RICs/hotspots). This will support the most effective identification of victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows and will step up the provision of protection and rehabilitation services to victims. Since December 2017, a unified Vulnerability Assessment is applied to all migrants entering the RICs that includes human trafficking indicators. Safe Zones for unaccompanied minors and separated children have been created in all RICs and Child Protection Officers have been appointed in all RICs - the latter have been trained on THB issues by international organizations in collaboration with the Office of the National Rapporteur. The Hellenic Police has increased the number of women officers patrolling in RICs. European and international organizations, as well as local NGOs, in collaboration with the First Reception Services and the Asylum Services, organize awareness raising campaigns inside the RICs. Trainings are periodically carried out addressing all actors working at RICs. The Network of Guardians coordinated by the NGO Metadrasi appoints Guardians to a considerable number of unaccompanied minors as soon as they land in the Aegean islands. It should be noted that in Chios, the Public Prosecutor issued a permission to the Guardians of unaccompanied minors to follow all procedures concerning the minor, including the initial registration and identification run by the Hellenic Police and Frontex. All migrants have free access to public health services, and all unaccompanied minors have access to public education. A new Law voted on July 2018 foresees the possibility of foster care for unaccompanied minors. Of course, we should acknowledge shortcomings and further challenges: a) European solutions in managing the large mixed migration flows must be further supported, as all RICs currently exceed their hosting capacity and are overcrowded which increases vulnerability of the most vulnerable; b) the so-called “social path” to the identification of victims of human trafficking must be further supported, in collaboration with the Law enforcement, the Judiciary and Welfare professionals; c) in many cases, human trafficking has happened before the migrants’ arrival to Greece. Further collaboration with origin countries, as well as countries of transit before migrants’ arrival to Greece and Europe should be established to enhance investigation of such cases and, thus, the prosecution of traffickers; d) the links between human smuggling and human trafficking blur the procedures of identifying victims of human trafficking in the mixed migration flows and further capacity building is needed on this subject.

The National Referral Mechanism has been finalized. The production of a Manual has been planned, and training based on the Manual and the SOPs will soon follow, addressing a broad range of professionals (e.g. Asylum Services, First Reception Services, Labour Inspectors, Medical Doctors, Law Enforcement, the Judiciary and others). However, the attempt to further increase the number of “referral agencies and organizations” collaborating with the NRM is ongoing.

Combating **child trafficking** remains a priority for the Greek State. We have already mentioned specific measures taken to protect children on the move, either accompanied or unaccompanied, temporarily residing in the RICs from human trafficking and other serious risks. In July 2018, the new Law on Guardianship was voted, which foresees the establishment of a State Network of professional Guardians, who among others will receive specialized training on taking care of children victims of human trafficking and children at risk for human trafficking. The Special Secretariat for the Social Integration of Roma has launched new programs to promote the protection of Roma children and enhance their school attendance. The Institute of Child Health, as well as National NGOs such as the Smile of the Child, Metadrasi, Praksis and Arsis run nationally or internationally funded projects on the prevention of violence against children, including the prevention of child trafficking.

The Office of the National Rapporteur has established a stable collaboration with the Labour Inspectorate **to combat forced labour**. Training of all Labour Inspectors on the identification and investigation of human trafficking cases has been approved and planned for 2019 - 2020. In addition, the broadening of the Labour Inspectorate’s investigative jurisdiction at the agricultural field is currently being discussed and the excellent results of the joint actions carried out by the Hellenic Police and the Labour Inspectorate in 2017-2018 have led to examining further possibilities for joint actions.

The **decrease of demand** for services and products coming from human trafficking constitutes a stable priority for the Greek State and the Office of the National Rapporteur. Towards this end, innovative projects supporting Public-Private Partnerships to combat human trafficking in supply chains are developed. In addition, the 4th edition of the National Campaign “Break the Chain” will be launched in October 2018, this year focusing on the prevention of child trafficking. At the same time, the inclusion of human rights education in the National Curriculum is being discussed.

An important **legislative development** has been the ratification of the Council of Europe’s “Istanbul Convention” on April 2018 (L. 4351/2018). Based on this Law, forced marriage is now included among the forms of human trafficking recognized by the Greek Penal Code. The Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings continues to review and support all National anti-trafficking activities, including drafting of the new National Action Plan.

Invaluable to the development of the latest anti-trafficking activities has been the collaboration with the civil society and the National NGOs, as well as the collaboration with the European

Commission and European and international organizations, such as OSCE, FRA, EASO, FRONTEX, EUROJUST, EUROPOL, UNODC, UNHCR, IOM, ODIHR and others.

Ms/Mr Moderator,

Greece is committed to protect universal human rights, and recognizes and appropriately responds to gender and age specific issues related to the protection of human rights. Concerning the fight against human trafficking, the Greek State has adopted a victim-centered approach, and values Human Security as much as State Security. Of course, we are fully aware of the challenges and shortcoming and we understand that a lot of work remains to be done to eliminate human trafficking; towards that end we believe that strong partnerships at European and international level will make us stronger and more effective.