



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**“ALLIANCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS”
Prevention of Modern Slavery:
“An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure”**

Opening remarks by the OSCE Secretary General
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

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Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear Excellencies, Ambassadors,

Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends!

It is my pleasure and privilege along with the Chairperson-in-Office to welcome you all - participants of this Alliance conference - on behalf of the OSCE, the Organization which is taking a very active part in the fight against human trafficking. I would like to express my appreciation for the considerable efforts undertaken by your respective States at the national level to curb this horrendous crime. The OSCE Secretariat, the Special Representative, the ODIHR and our Field Operations are fully at your disposal in supporting these efforts, and committed to working together to put an end to this modern form of slavery.

Of course, the OSCE is not alone in this long, complex and multifaceted battle. I would like in particular to extend a warm welcome to our close partners in the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons, and to commend this unique, informal, and efficient forum, this excellent platform for common advocacy, dialogue,

and sharing of expertise and best practices. The Alliance, launched by the OSCE in 2004, has gained wide recognition by the international community and by the participating States of the OSCE. Let me note in this regard that the OSCE highly appreciates the presence of the UN Special Rapporteurs at this forum. I am sure that the dialogue we initiated together with UN colleagues in the summer of 2009 will open a new chapter in the collaboration between the OSCE structures and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Procedures under the Human Rights Council.

We can succeed in preventing trafficking only if we work together, with contributions from all those with experience and vision to share. The OSCE welcomes the forthcoming presentations by the UN Special Rapporteurs, ILO, IOM, UNODC, Council of Europe, the World Bank, politicians, parliamentarians, high-ranking diplomats, representatives of governmental structures, non-governmental organizations, independent experts, journalists, film-makers and researchers. It is quite encouraging that the OSCE has steadily increased the representation of anti-trafficking stake-holders at this forum. This is proof that the fight against modern-day slavery is a joint venture that unites us all.

Let me also congratulate the OSCE Special Representative for having achieved an excellent level of representation of the participating States at this event. We have among us here today many recognized leaders in the fight against trafficking, personalities whose dedication been proven on many occasions. In my opinion, this is also evidence of the OSCE's role in the universal fight against the human misery which is human trafficking.

Prevention is a broad issue, closely related to the other so-called three P's (Protection and Prosecution). Often, it is hard to differentiate between

“prevention” as such and the preventative effect of adequate prosecution, or the prevention of re-trafficking by providing adequate protection to the victim. Prevention of trafficking is an especially cross-dimensional issue for the OSCE. Trafficking is a transnational security threat that requires cooperation among participating States, as well as zero tolerance for exploitation and discrimination. It requires better economic opportunities for employment and the enhancement of good governance and the fight against corruption. It also requires the creation of educational and professional opportunities for women, and careful attention to the best interests of children and youth. It has direct impact on the OSCE’s core mandate of conflict prevention, as trafficking is often a consequence of conflict and displacement. Each of these areas, when addressed in a comprehensive way, has a strong impact on the prevention of slavery.

By eliminating the root causes of trafficking, countries can prevent those most vulnerable from taking desperate and risky decisions that may easily lead to enslavement. Decent alternatives may prevent former victims (or those who are still under the control of traffickers) from becoming traffickers themselves, in order to “escape” from humiliation and torture. Prevention of child trafficking can avert long-term trauma on children’s mental and physical health, and help break a vicious cycle that spans generations. We cannot afford to neglect each individual life that is touched by this scourge.

Dear colleagues,

We have an extremely interesting and promising agenda for these two days, with highly professional presentations, discussion, a film screening, a photo exhibition, and, of course, networking among colleagues.

The conference has a significant explorative component, as there have not been many opportunities to discuss trafficking in human beings as a “business model”. This may also be very helpful for understanding the mechanisms of this crime, and, on the basis of new knowledge, how to dismantle it.

In addition, there have not been that many occasions when we have examined in detail the role of the media in preventing trafficking. The first effort in this area was initiated by the Special Representative, together with the Lithuanian Government, in Vilnius in 2007. We should do more in this area. Our enemy is sophisticated and opportunistic – we must be as well. We must ensure that everyone sees the reality of modern slavery. And we must act.

Let me assure you that your views, your recommendations, your visions of what we can and should do mean a lot for the OSCE, and will help us to strengthen a shared platform for our efforts in the prevention of human trafficking. I wish you every success in your deliberations. Thank you for your attention.