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OSCE Permanent Council No. 1248 Vienna, 21 November 2019

EU Statement in Response to the Report by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Mr. Valiant Richey

The European Union welcomes the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Mr. Valiant Richey, to the Permanent Council. On the occasion of your first report to the Permanent Council in this capacity, we would like to congratulate you for your appointment as the fifth Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings since the establishment of the position in 2005.

Combating trafficking in human beings remains a key priority of the European Union. Efficiently targeting this global and complex crime requires close cooperation between all OSCE participating States, Partners for Cooperation and actors of civil society.

The EU and its MS are committed to working closely with international partners to promote adherence to international legal standards on trafficking in persons, in line with UNTOC and the Palermo Protocols.

The EU has in place a solid legal and policy framework to address trafficking in human beings, under the horizontal mandate of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, emanating from the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, who ensures a coherent Union response to address trafficking in human beings within and outside the EU.

The EU recalls the adoption of two Decisions on preventing trafficking in human beings and strengthening efforts to combat all forms of child trafficking, during the 2017 Ministerial Council in Vienna, as well as the adoption of the Decision on strengthening



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efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking, including of unaccompanied minors, during the 2018 Ministerial Council in Milan.

We very much encourage the “policy to practice” methodology of the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Being in assisting participating States and Partners for Co-operation in the implementation of their OSCE anti-trafficking commitments. Your work on identification and protection of human trafficking cases in mixed migration flows, addressing child trafficking or prevention of human trafficking in supply chains, are just a few examples that demonstrate the value and impact of this approach in all pillars of the 2003 Action Plan and its 2013 Addendum. The recent publication of the compendium of resources and guide on financial investigations is another illustration of the role that your office can play in coordinating and building up on fragmented efforts with the view of improving the criminal justice response to trafficking.

We commend your country visits, which allow to maintain dialogue with the authorities and with the actors in the field, to promote the full implementation of OSCE commitments, to identify promising practices and to formulate country-specific recommendations.

We further outline the value of developing innovative training programs, such as the “(collaborative) simulation-based” trainings, aiming at building the capacity of participating States and Partners for Co-operation to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking of human beings, as well as to promptly identify trafficked persons.

Exploring emerging trends in the field of trafficking in human beings should remain one of the priorities of your Office. Accordingly, the EU supports your ongoing work on the intersection of technology and trafficking. The focus of this year’s Alliance Conference on the role of ICT in combating trafficking in human beings and the development, by the



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OSCE in its role as co-chair of ICAT, of the issue brief on technology-related trends, challenges and opportunities, constitute a good basis for further work in this field.

Finally, the EU promotes more elaborated and better co-ordinated partnerships, both within the OSCE and across the international community. In this respect, we welcome efforts aimed at strengthening co-ordination with all OSCE executive structures (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, field missions, Transnational Threats Department, Conflict Prevention Centre, etc.). We also commend the cooperation between your Office and the Council of Europe and GRETA on awareness raising, capacity building, as well as with respect to monitoring activities. Moreover, we welcome the Office co-chairing, together with UN Women, of the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), which is a clear sign of recognition of the work of the OSCE in this important field. We would welcome even stronger cooperation between the OSCE and the UNODC in the field of combatting trafficking in persons and migrants smuggling, in order to promote the full implementation of relevant UN instruments (the Palermo Convention and its two additional Protocols).

In conclusion, we take a very positive view of your work in 2019. It is essential to continue the fight against trafficking in human beings from a cross-dimensional perspective and with a human rights-based, victim-centered, gender-specific and child-sensitive approach. Taking into account the disproportionate targeting of women and girls, we emphasize the importance of addressing the gender dimension of human trafficking and would encourage you to continue enhancing the Office's work on this issue. We thank you for your efforts, which enable the OSCE to remain a privileged platform for elaborating a comprehensive and common response to human trafficking, thereby strengthening the stability and security of our region. We look forward to continuing the co-operation with your Office and wish you every success.



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The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.