



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Summary Review 2005

In the year 2005 the OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings gave priority to combating trafficking in children and trafficking for labour exploitation/forced and bonded labour.

These issues were dealt with at 2 high-level conferences organized within the framework of the “Alliance against Trafficking in Persons” on 18 March and 7/8 November 2005 in order to stimulate deeper reflection and coordinated action in dealing with these problems at issue and to establish a dialogue with and among the OSCE participating States on how to address the special assistance and protection needs of children, on the one hand, and on how to dismantle the structures underlying trafficking for forced and bonded labor, on the other hand.

The goal of these conferences was to provide high-quality practice oriented background information to governments as decision-making aids in the formulation of anti-trafficking strategies. The Conference on Child Trafficking also helped prepare the ground for the formulation of the Addendum on Combating Trafficking in Children to the OSCE Anti-trafficking Action Plan to be adopted at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Ljubljana on 5/6 December 2005.

Although in recent years things have slightly changed for the better, and despite increased attention at the political level, victims of trafficking are still frequently seen as perpetrators, and are criminalised. Instead of being taken to appropriate shelters, they are still often put into custody in the receiving countries and/or immediately returned to their home countries. The protection and assistance measures currently offered are very often human rights insensitive.

These issues were addressed in workshops and in meetings of national and international experts. The purpose of expert-level meetings is to fine-tune existing approaches, measures and activities with a view to step up their impact and make them more sustainable. A case in point was the expert meeting held on 28 February this year on how to make victim assistance and protection more effective.

All the relevant OSCE structures and institutions (ODHIR, SPMU, OCEEA, Senior Gender Adviser, and Field Presences) were invited to contribute their share to the conferences and meetings and to provide know-how and concrete input from their specific work areas.

“Alliance against Trafficking in Persons” is the motto chosen by the Special Representative for the joint efforts to combat human trafficking undertaken together with major international, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors. It takes account of the complexity of the problem and complements existing coordination efforts among the OSCE and other international partners. The “Alliance Expert Coordination Team”, which is a forum for discussing and streamlining appropriate responses to the individual links in the human

trafficking chain and to the problem as a whole, met 3 times in 2005 presided over by the Special Representative.

It is thanks to the findings and results of these meetings that the OSCE has a major share in framing the EU Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking and that the OSCE Action Plan is expressly mentioned in the pertinent EU Communication as a reference document.

In the performance of her tasks and in line with her mandate, the OSCE Special Representative has paid official visits to 24 OSCE participating States (15 EU countries, 4 of them new EU member states, 4 to SEE countries, 5 to CIS countries), assessing the situation on the ground and discussing strategies and concrete future steps with decision-makers and stakeholders. The purpose of these fact-finding missions/country visits, which is to facilitate the interaction between theory and practice, have proved to be a highly effective tool in gauging whether human trafficking is perceived as that which it really is: namely a serious crime and horrendous violation of human rights.

In addition to the OSCE conferences and meetings under the aegis of the “Alliance against Trafficking in Persons” the Special Representative participated – upon invitation – as keynote speaker in more than 50 national, regional and international conferences, meetings, workshops, round tables, panel discussions etc., thus further strengthening cooperation on all aspects of the fight against human trafficking and enhancing the visibility of the OSCE’s overall commitment to vigorously fighting this scourge and to strengthening its leading role in this field.

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the overall trafficking situation in the OSCE region and to give an account of the struggle against it, the Special Representative has given guidance on the collection of qualitative and quantitative information, facts and figures for the preparation of a report which will inform about both good practice examples and about factors impeding an effective fight against human trafficking. The report is due to be published in early 2006.

and Outlook 2006

In the year 2006, emphasis will continue to be placed on the fight against trafficking in children and the fight against trafficking for labour exploitation/forced and bonded labour.

Subsequent to the formal adoption of the Addendum on Trafficking in Children to the OSCE Action Plan, in December 2005, the challenge, next year, will be its implementation.

With this in mind, we have launched, in cooperation with the Austrian EU Presidency and IOM, a project under the EU AGIS budget line for law-enforcement officials from 43 countries. Partners of the project are the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the Belgian Federal Police and Europol. The project is designed to provide training to the participants in ways of investigating cases of child trafficking, taking due account of the best interests of the children.

This project will be concluded with a high-level conference at the Hofburg in Vienna on 17 March 2006, mounted together with the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Ministry of Health and Women’s Issues. The agenda will include the presentation of the outcome of the AGIS project, the discussion of good practices and further strategies for the

implementation of sustainable structures and mechanisms in combating child trafficking. The afternoon session may be devoted to the health implications of trafficking, including the problem of traumatising.

Another high-level conference in the framework of the “Alliance against Trafficking in Persons”, scheduled for the autumn, is supposed to follow up on the issue of trafficking for labour exploitation/forced and bonded labour, with a focus on prosecution in addition to prevention, identification and victim protection.

Two meetings/workshops at expert level, planned to be held in spring and autumn, respectively, are to be dedicated to further developing transnational mechanisms of cooperation in dismantling the criminal networks involved in human trafficking, from their beginnings in the countries of origin to the end users in the countries of destination, by targeting the perpetrators and collaborators along the entire trafficking chain.

One of these meetings should gather organisations and experts that have generated different types of training material for law enforcement officials, judges, etc., for the purpose of stock-taking, of harmonising approaches and of collating content. Ideally, the outcome should be a clearly structured overview of who is able to provide what and for whom.

Considering the complexity of the problem, which has so far prevented us from looking in depth into issues, such as internal trafficking, trafficking for forced marriages, trafficking in organs, the Special Representative shall continue to consult with the Alliance Expert Coordination Team* (2-3 times a year), with a view to coordinating and streamlining approaches and responses to specific aspects of human trafficking and to the problem as a whole. The principal aim of this exercise is to come up with agreed, joint decision-making aids and strategies for governments and all those responsible on the spot for the fight against human trafficking.

2006 will also see a continuation of the Special Representative’s country visits for the purpose of raising awareness of the many dimensions of human trafficking, of taking stock of the progress made in the implementation of the commitments signed by the OSCE participating States and of the OSCE Action Plan, and last but not least for the purpose of generating the political understanding and will to vigorously combat this scourge.

*** The Expert Coordination Team of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons** includes: OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, ATAU, SPMU, OCEEA, Senior Gender Adviser, ODIHR, UNHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNODC, ILO, IOM, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Council of Europe, ICMPD, Europol, Interpol, EC Expert Group, Dutch National Rapporteur, Nexus Institute, ACTA, Anti-Slavery International, ECPAT, La Strada International, International Federation of Terre des Hommes, Save the Children International Alliance.