



**United States Mission to the OSCE**

**Response to the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

**Mr. Valiant Richey**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 21, 2019

We warmly welcome OSCE Coordinator and Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Val Richey here to the Permanent Council for his first annual report in this capacity. The United States strongly supports the work of the Special Representative's Office, as well as the work across all OSCE structures, to combat human trafficking.

The OSCE clearly has been very busy this year, working on a wide range of issues related to trafficking in persons. I would like to highlight a few of these.

First, the United States continues to support OSCE efforts to combat child trafficking. As you know, together with the Slovak Chairmanship and Belarus, we are co-sponsoring a draft decision for the Bratislava Ministerial that seeks to empower schoolchildren to evade tactics used by traffickers. As governments we work to do everything in our power to protect children from human traffickers. Despite our efforts, traffickers still succeed in luring them through their online activities or through other tactics such as blackmail, false promises of work, or coercive romantic relationships. We believe that providing children with information about online safety and human trafficking will help them build skills to resist such tactics.

The draft decision also addresses another important issue – the need to take a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach when supporting trafficking victims. Victims often suffer from severe trauma, and our responses need to create a sense of physical, psychological, and emotional safety that promotes survivor empowerment and recovery, as well as helps survivors be a part of an effective criminal justice response. Survivor engagement and input is a central tenet of the U.S. government's victim-centered and trauma-informed approach to combating human trafficking. The draft decision encourages participating States to take into consideration the input and recommendations of human trafficking survivor experts, or networks where they exist, in the development and application of policies and programs. For our part, we are sharing for comment, and for the first time in a multilateral context, the draft decision with the Human Trafficking Expert Consultant Network, which is a new Department of State initiative to strengthen and inform our anti-trafficking efforts. We hope all delegations will join us in supporting this important Ministerial decision.

Second, the United States supported the focus on technology and human trafficking of the Alliance Against Trafficking meeting held last April here in Vienna. Although technology can be an instrument used by human traffickers, it can also be an effective tool in our effort to stop them. For example, technology enhances victim identification through pattern and facial recognition software used to detect online sex trafficking of minors. Also law enforcement uses technology to search a trafficker's computer, mobile phone record, and banking information. We look forward to continuing work next year on this cutting-edge issue.

Third, we support ongoing OSCE work to address trafficking and other forms of labor exploitation in global supply chains to ensure that governments and businesses do their utmost to implement ethical sourcing practices. Governments, in particular, can lead by example through their procurement policies by implementing measures to prevent trafficking in persons and related activities in their own supply chains, by working toward transparency, and by encouraging dialogue and partnerships to bring businesses together with anti-trafficking and labor rights experts. We support the efforts of the OSCE to address these issues in its own supply chains, making it the first multilateral organization to do so, and leading the way for others.

Fourth, we agree that migrants are frequently at risk of human trafficking at various points along their journey, including at destination, and we all need to do more to address risks and better prevent the crime from occurring in this context. In this regard, we support OSCE efforts such as the simulation training exercises held in Italy and Kazakhstan to train various stakeholders on best practices for victim identification and protection, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking in the context of migration flows.

Lastly, we appreciate that the OSCE is co-chairing the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), a first for a regional multilateral organization. ICAT is a policy forum mandated by the UN General Assembly to improve coordination among UN agencies and other relevant international organizations, co-chairing ICAT is an important international role. Of note: the OSCE availed itself of its co-chairmanship of ICAT to highlight the issue of procurement, and to share its political commitments and tools related to preventing forced labor in both the public and organizational procurement of goods and services.

Mr. Chair, we also are pleased that Special Representative Richey and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are coordinating their efforts to combat human trafficking. We support ODIHR's work on combating trafficking, including the forthcoming update to its handbook on National Referral Mechanisms.

We look forward to continued cooperation with you, Mr. Richey and with your staff.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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