



19th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference

Vienna, 9 April 2019

OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger

Closing Remarks

Dear participants at this year's Alliance Conference,

Thank you for attending this important event and for actively engaging in the discussions. I hope that you will carry the enthusiasm and energy generated at this meeting back home to your colleagues and friends. I also hope that your participation will help to stimulate effective policies and concrete, practical work at the local, national and regional levels.

Over the past two days, speakers highlighted some of the extraordinary challenges that we are facing:

- Technology and the Internet in particular are providing traffickers with opportunities to dramatically enlarge the market for human trafficking;
- The progressively more sophisticated use of technology by the traffickers adds additional layers of complexity for law enforcement; and affords traffickers an unprecedented level of anonymity;
- Technology enables traffickers to carry out truly global operations with significant impacts on border security;
- Technology contributes to an increase in the number of human trafficking victims and a corresponding increase in the illegal proceeds that trafficking generates.

In sum, we can conclude without a doubt that ICT-facilitated trafficking is a grave threat to security in the OSCE region and the human rights of its people.

Our task now is to figure out how to overcome these challenges and harness technology as an asset in combating trafficking. Here, I would like to draw your attention to four points that were highlighted during the conference:

First, we need to **listen to survivors and learn from their experiences**. In addition to being a great source of inspiration and motivation, survivors can help us find the right responses. Their insights and advice allow us to better understand how criminals use technology to exploit people so we can develop strategies to take effective counter-measures.

Second, we need to **partner with civil society, in particular with the private sector**. Without their expertise and resources, state efforts to curb the misuse of technology by the traffickers while making technology work as an enabler for counter-trafficking, simply cannot succeed.

Third, broad **multi-agency co-operation** to combat ICT-facilitated trafficking must include parts of government, such as cyber police, that may not have been considered stakeholders in the past.

Finally, OSCE participating States should seek opportunities to **leverage technology as a force multiplier in their anti-trafficking work** – to prevent exploitation, protect victims and hold traffickers accountable. Admittedly, more sophisticated use of technology comes with a considerable price-tag but it is the only way to fight tech-driven crime in the modern world.

Dear colleagues,

Technology carries great potential for advancing OSCE commitments and implementing the OSCE's Action Plan. We are discovering this also in our analysis of the OSCE's own supply chains. Here, the use of new technology will help us to map trafficking risks so that we can mitigate against them.

Before closing, I would like to thank all speakers, who have contributed to the success of this event. In particular, I thank Ms Melanie Thompson for her testimony and encouragement to keep up our good efforts. I also thank Val (Richey) and his team for the excellent organization. To all of you, once again, thank you for attending the Alliance Conference this year. I hope to see you back next year and wish you the best of success in your work in this field.

Thank you.