



STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE

2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Sessions 14: Humanitarian issues and other commitments, including combating trafficking in human beings, refugees and displaced persons, persons at risk of displacement

Warsaw, 19 September 2018

Mr./Madam Moderator,

The Delegation of the Holy See is pleased to offer the following considerations on the topics of this 14th working session.

On the issues of migration, including refugees and displaced persons, the OSCE recognizes “the leading role of the United Nations”.¹ This does not deny the OSCE’s key complementary role, but stresses rather the importance of the OSCE focusing on its specific capabilities and strengths, and avoids simply duplicating what is done by other actors, a point the Holy See has repeatedly made. In particular, there are a number of crucial human dimension issues on which the OSCE should continue to give attention to migrants, refugees and displaced persons. These would include the right to life, the rule of law, freedom of religion or belief, as well as specific consideration on the family, notably family reunification, specified even in the Helsinki Final Act, as well as women and children.

¹ MC Dec. No. 3/16 - *OSCE’s Role in the Governance of Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees*.

The Holy See reiterates its firm condemnation of the trafficking in human beings – a grave and profound wound to human dignity and to universal human rights. However, while trafficking in human beings continues to represent a major challenge to the OSCE participating States, it is important to recognise that much effort is being devoted to prevent and combat this form of modern slavery. Our Delegation would like to pay tribute to the tireless and silent work done by many religious organizations and groups in raising awareness of this plague, echoing the words of last year’s Ministerial Council meeting in Vienna, which in a special way recognized “the contribution of civil society, including religious organizations, in preventing trafficking in human beings, and in assisting its victims”.²

That being said, the words of Pope Francis continue to have relevance: “one of the challenges to this work of advocacy, education and coordination is a certain indifference and even complicity, a tendency on the part of many to look the other way”.³ It remains crucial that in combating trafficking in human beings, all stakeholders work together to make visible that which is invisible, recognizing that trafficking in human beings occurs in every society.

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to make the following recommendations:

² MC Dec. No. 6/17 – *Strengthening efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings*.

³ Pope Francis, *Greeting to the 2nd European Assembly of RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation)*, 7 November 2016.

- that participating States continue to discuss how to deal with the many migration related issues on which the OSCE has a complementary role to play, ensuring that these issues are not excluded due to politicization;
- that the participating States ensure that OSCE executive structures have the necessary funding and staff to comply with the tasking given to these structures in last year's two MC decisions on anti-trafficking efforts;
- that ODIHR continue its engagement with civil society, including religious organizations, in advancing a broad and multi-stakeholder effort aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and providing assistance to victims.

Thank you, Mr./Madam Moderator.