

OSCE 2010 Review Conference

Warsaw, 30 September – 8 October 2010

Forward-looking discussions

Session 3

**Combating trafficking in human beings,
with a particular focus on trafficking in children**

Contribution of the Council of Europe

Current work of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings – GRETA and the Committee of the Parties

One of the primary concerns of the Council of Europe is the safeguarding and protection of human rights and human dignity. Trafficking in human beings constitutes a violation of human rights and is an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being. As such, it undermines the very values on which the Council of Europe is based.

To fight this modern form of slavery, the Council of Europe adopted in 2005 the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, a comprehensive treaty aimed at preventing trafficking, protecting the human rights of its victims and prosecuting the traffickers. The Convention **entered into force on 1 February 2008** and, up to date, has been **ratified by 30** and **signed by a further 13** Council of Europe member states. As trafficking in human beings is a world-wide phenomenon which knows no borders, the Convention is not restricted to Council of Europe member states; non-member states and the European Union also have the possibility of becoming Parties.

The entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention on 1 February 2008 triggered the setting-up of its monitoring mechanism, which is now fully operational. This mechanism consists of two pillars: the *Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* (GRETA) and the *Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* (“the Committee of the Parties”).

GRETA is a technical body, composed of independent and highly qualified experts. It is responsible for evaluating the implementation of the Convention by the parties. GRETA meetings are held *in camera*. **In December 2009** GRETA adopted the *Questionnaire for the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties – First evaluation round* (“the Questionnaire”). The Questionnaire is public and can be consulted on the Council of Europe’s anti-trafficking website: www.coe.int/trafficking. **In February 2010** GRETA initiated the first round of the evaluation of the implementation of the Convention by the Parties by addressing the Questionnaire to the following first ten countries which became Parties to the Convention: *Moldova, Romania, Austria, Albania, Georgia, Slovak Republic, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark and Cyprus*. The Parties concerned were requested to respond at the latest on 1 September 2010. GRETA will adopt its evaluation reports in respect of the above-mentioned Parties in course of 2011.

GRETA will evaluate the implementation of the Convention by the remaining 20 Parties in accordance with the following timetable:

- by 1 February 2011 the Questionnaire will be sent to: *France, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Malta, Portugal, Latvia, Armenia, Montenegro, Poland and the United Kingdom*. GRETA will adopt its evaluation Reports in respect of these Parties in the course of 2012.
- by 1 February 2012 the Questionnaire will be sent to the following Parties: *Spain, Luxembourg, Serbia, Belgium, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Slovenia, Netherlands, Sweden, Azerbaijan and Ireland*. GRETA will adopt its evaluation Reports in respect of these Parties in the course of 2013.

GRETA's Reports and conclusions will be sent to the Committee of the Parties. The Committee of the Parties is a political body of the monitoring mechanism. It may adopt recommendations, based on GRETA's Reports and conclusions, which will be addressed to the Parties concerned. The Committee of the Parties also elects members of GRETA. Furthermore, the Committee of the Parties functions as an international observatory on the prevention and combating of trafficking in human beings and the protection of the human rights of the victims of trafficking. It was in this function that on the occasion of its **4th meeting on 13 September 2010**, the Committee of the Parties hosted a **thematic debate on Partnerships among international organisations active in the field of trafficking in human beings: need for co-ordinated action**. The aim of the debate was to have an overview of the state of play of the work of different international organisations active in combating trafficking in human beings and to find possible ways to strengthen co-operation among these organisations as well as to avoid duplication in their respective activities. Representatives of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, having participatory¹ and observer² status with the Committee of the Parties, took part in the debate.

¹ The European Union.

² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Interpol, Europol, Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery International, La Strada International and the International Federation Terre des Hommes (IFTDH).