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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 22 September - 3 October 2014

EU Statement on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Working Session 6: Humanitarian issues and other commitments

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and its Member States in this working session, focusing on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings.

The issue of combatting trafficking has been high on the agenda of the OSCE for more than a decade, since the adoption in 2003 of the OSCE Action Plan. The EU highly values the fact that the consecutive OSCE chairmanships deal with this issue as a priority and spare no efforts in order to reach tangible results in fostering co-operation at European and international level. We particularly welcome the decision No. 7/13 of the OSCE Ministerial Council in December adopting the 2013 Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan. By taking into due consideration the new forms and trends of trafficking related crimes, as well as by underlining the importance of co-operation and partnership at national and international level, this document constitutes an important milestone in this combat.

The OSCE's and the Council of Europe's joint conference "*Not for sale – Joining Forces Against Trafficking in Human Beings*" that took place on 17–18 February was a well-received initiative of practical implementation of an enhanced partnership between the main stakeholders. The EU welcomes that participants could identify a lot of new avenues for joint action based on the complementary and mutually reinforcing norms, commitments and standards of the two organisations.



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Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Addressing trafficking in human beings is at the forefront of the EU's activities. The EU has put forward a comprehensive legal and policy framework, which is human rights based, victims centred, gender specific and child sensitive. The EU anti-trafficking directive, is complemented by the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012-2016) serving as the policy framework for our action.

As part of the numerous deliverables of the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Humans Beings, the European Union has launched the EU Civil Society Platform against trafficking in human beings, which brings together more than 100 NGOs. An electronic platform will be made available by the European Commission, to act as a space for discussion, sharing of information, exchange of good practices and for linking services and assistance provided to victims. The platform aims at ensuring a sustainable and regular dialogue between civil society organisations.

As a part of the EU's above mentioned anti-trafficking strategy, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has recently released a handbook to strengthen national guardianship systems for children with a view to standardising Member States' practices and ensuring also that they are better equipped to deal with the specific needs of child victims of trafficking.

The Commission has also produced guidelines for the identification of victims and an overview of victims' rights, translated in all EU languages. The last EU anti-trafficking day, organised in cooperation with the Lithuanian Presidency focused on the role of internet.

Eradicating trafficking in human beings is also a priority area of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) which has provided, since 2005, the overarching



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framework for the EU external migration policy. Preventing and fighting Trafficking in Human Beings and the protection of its victims is systematically addressed in all EU dialogues and cooperation frameworks on migration and mobility with third countries, including the visa liberalisation dialogues. Likewise, it has also been identified as a priority in the Commission Communication on the work of the Task Force Mediterranean of 4 December 2013.

The European Commission continued funding numerous projects addressing trafficking in human beings, implemented by governmental authorities and the civil society both inside and outside the EU, focusing on prevention, protection, assistance and support of victims.

Finally let me also mention the European Migration Network's Study, published in March, on Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in International Protection and Forced Return Procedures, analysing the existing victim identification procedures of EU Member States.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of all efforts, criminal statistics and indirect evidence shows that trafficking remains a serious challenge in the OSCE region. More is needed in order to protect the victims, who in the overwhelming majority of cases belong to the vulnerable groups of society. Women and girls are particularly affected, bearing in mind that 98 % of victims of forced commercial sexual exploitation are women. Therefore trafficking in human beings as a gross human rights violation should also be considered as violence against women and girls. More efficient awareness raising activities are needed, involving stakeholders from the fields of education, social care, gender equality, human rights and anti-discrimination, etc. Effective measures should also be implemented in order to discourage those from taking advantage of or using the services of the victims. Protection of and assistance to the victims must be



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improved as well, with a special regard to the most vulnerable, such as migrants and children. It is with this in mind that the EU looks forward to the forthcoming 14th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference entitled “Ethical issues in Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking”, which will take place on 4-5 November 2014.

The EU also appreciates that as a follow-up to the conference “*Not for Sale*” the chairmanships of the OSCE and the Council of Europe took the initiative of organising a joint workshop for members of the judiciary and prosecutors on how to better implement the non-punishment provision with regard to victims of trafficking in human beings. We recommend that the upcoming chairmanships of the two organisations continue this cooperation providing the possibility for the experts to discuss and coordinate on various aspects of the complex issue of human trafficking.

Mr Chairman,

Let me conclude by thanking once more Ms Giammarinaro for her four-year work as the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combatting Human Trafficking. I also wish to extend our full support to the newly appointed Special Representative and Co-ordinator, Ms Madina Jarbussynova as well as to the newly appointed Director of ODIHR, Dr. Michael Georg Link.

Thank you for your attention.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.