

WARSAW, 3 October 2006

OSCE HDIM-WORKING SESSION 2 AND 3
**Addressing factors contributing to the cycle
of Trafficking in Human Beings**

STATEMENT BY THE GREEK DELEGATION

Allow me first to express our appreciation for the fact that the problem of trafficking in human beings has been given a prominent place at this year's HDIM. Trafficking is indeed one of the most serious challenges in the area of human rights violation and international organized crime.

Two main reasons incited the Greek Delegation to intervene in the dialogue on this issue: The first is to communicate to you my country's efforts to effectively respond to the problem, efforts that include legislative reforms, cooperation among law enforcement, prosecution and judiciary, protection of victims, and strengthening of cooperation on an international level. The second reason is that the whole circle of trafficking is an acute problem in the region of South Eastern Europe.

Greece, fully supportive of the high priority that has been given by the OSCE and other organizations to the fight against Trafficking in Human Beings has increased its efforts in this field, both at national and regional level.

At national level with the launching in 2004 of an Action Plan, focusing:

- a) On rendering the prosecution of the traffickers more effective,
- b) On reinforcing the preventive measures and
- c) On improving the protection of the victims.

As to the **prosecution**:

-15 counter Trafficking task forces have been established throughout Greece, whose mandate is, among others, the exchange of intelligence with prosecutors and NGOs.

-A proactive law enforcement has been adopted so that sentences reflect the severity of the crime.

-A large scale coordination, on a national level, is being implemented, between competent authorities and NGOs for purposes of victim identification, referral, assistance, investigation and prosecution.

- With a view to targeting the **demand** of trafficked persons, a legal provision was introduced which punishes anyone who knowingly offers employment to trafficked persons with no less than six months of imprisonment.

In the area of **protection of the victims**:

- A special provision for the protection of the witnesses has been included in the anti-trafficking Law.
 - Effective screening and referral mechanisms are implemented, considered to be the best answer to possible shortcomings, such as the deportation of probable victims of trafficking because of lack of identification.
 - In line with the EU Directive 2004/81/EC, a **reflection period** of one month has been introduced, both for identified and possible victims of trafficking.
 - A one year residence permit is offered to the victims, which allows them to have access to the labour market and vocational training.
 - 24-hour telephone hot-lines as well as six shelters for victims of Trafficking are currently operating.
 - Victims are offered humanitarian repatriation in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as free legal support and administrative assistance and health care.
 - Special attention is being given to the prevention of Child Trafficking. In this framework, we joined the Transnational Action against Child Trafficking project in Albania, promoting in this case the cooperation of HELLENIC AID and USAID. Also, 20 shelters for unaccompanied children operate, many of which were established in locations close to the Greek borders.
- A "know your rights" leaflet, translated in 13 languages, has been issued.
- The institutionalization of the cooperation with the NGOs in the framework of a "permanent forum" has greatly facilitated NGO access to the screening and referral process.

In the area of **prevention** the following steps have been taken:

- Counter trafficking police task forces and the competent prosecutors receive specialized training on regular basis.
- Law enforcement officers are offered specialized training for two years in the framework of the EU AGIS project.
- Following the repatriation of the victims, Greece finances reintegration and vocational programs in their countries of origin.
- The Greek NGO "Human Rights Defense Center" implements a project, entitled "Ariadne", aiming at establishing a Balkan network of 18 counter-trafficking NGOs for fostering regional cooperation among NGOs and the promotion of synergies between NGOs and respective states.
- A television spot was sponsored by the Greek Government, aiming at raising awareness on Human Trafficking.

As to Greece's participation in **international efforts** to tackle the problem, the following should be mentioned:

- Greece and Albania signed, in 2006, an Agreement which aims at helping family reunification and social rehabilitation of young victims

of trafficking. We intend to sign similar agreements with other countries of the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

- In cooperation with OSCE, the Stability Pact for SE Europe and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the alternative seat of the Stability Pact in Thessalonica coordinates and hosts several local and regional initiatives. One such initiative is the International anti-trafficking contact point in Thessalonica.

- The Foreign Ministry and the Greek NGO “European Center of Public Law”, implement the HERA project aiming at the improvement, under the auspices of OSCE and the Stability Pact, and codification of the anti-trafficking laws in five countries of origin as well as the further education and training of judicial authorities.

- Greece hosted the signing by representatives of the international business Community of the Declaration of Athens on “Business Community against Trafficking in Persons”, under the auspices of the UN, the World Bank, the International Organization on Migration and other actors, aiming at the adoption of a Code of conduct against human trafficking.

- Finally, the Greek Police is implementing an operational project to combat THB under the code name of “ILAEIRA” , which launches a large scale national and cross-border operation that is bringing together police task forces, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and NGOs.