



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

“ALLIANCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS”

**Prevention of Modern Slavery:
“An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure”**

Vienna, Hofburg, Neuer Saal
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Closing remarks by Eva Biaudet
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for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Dear Excellencies, Ambassadors,
Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends!

We have come to the conclusion of the Conference. Let me thank you all, especially our speakers and moderators for sharing your vision and experience with the participating States – the main beneficiaries of the Alliance high-level events.

It was very special for me to have the three UN Special Rapporteurs here together, and to have the opportunity to reinforce our common values and human rights based approach. As Ms Ezeilo aptly said, “whatever strategy we adopt, it must be people-centred. Human trafficking is about the basic rights of people to live free from fear and want, which is sadly under constant threat”. Slavery has never completely ceased to exist during recorded history, but the form that it takes have changed, as Ms. Shahinian stated.

I am glad that we share concerns about the lack of reliable data on the real scope of human trafficking and would like to commend the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons for the proposal to analyse existing information collected from different stakeholders. This was a recommendation that the OSCE adopted in 2003, and we continue to actively advocate for the National Rapporteur or equivalent mechanism.

I am glad that we also addressed the context of the global financial crisis. The presentations by the ILO, IOM and World Bank demonstrated the worsening conditions of migrants in both countries of origin and destination and highlighted potential serious consequences such as growing tolerance for all forms of xenophobia and discrimination, job losses, reduced or non-payment of wages, and significantly reduced remittances, affecting communities. Restrictive immigration policies again create opportunities and

incentives for human traffickers who prey on desperate people prepared to accept even exploitative conditions.

Respecting the dignity and rights of migrants is a critical part of the prevention of human trafficking. Authorities who protect the rights of migrants send a clear signal to the general public about compassion and humanity. Bad treatment again gives contradictory signals – of unworthiness. We know that migrants, particularly those without language and other skills, are especially vulnerable to serious exploitation and enslavement. I have to reiterate that we all have to pursue a more gender balanced and child friendly approach to safe migration policies. I am really encouraged by the examples of good practices which have been presented at this forum by our colleagues and participants.

I agree with Roger Plant (ILO) who warned us about applying a too simplistic approach to the financial crisis in the context of trafficking. As the ILO clearly pointed out, we must use a multistakeholder approach to curb trafficking and forced labour in the face of the global economic crisis. Strengthening the cooperation between government and businesses is vital, especially in introducing regulations and conducting monitoring to root out exploitative labour conditions.

I also support the proposal of Ms Jean Geran to closely monitor the patterns of trafficking changing due to financial crisis and create low-cost and nimble coordination mechanisms that can improve targeting and increase speed of joint responses to these new threats, build knowledge and experience on trafficking and money laundering. There should be additional efforts seeking new partnership opportunities, including mobilization of youth to prevent trafficking.

In this regard let me express our appreciation of the efforts made by researchers in analyzing trafficking as a business model and going deeper into understanding of the modus operandi of the whole chain of traffickers. It would be essential to disrupt the activities before they take place and thus prevent the crime. It is the enormous profits – the money – that drive the traffickers. Going after the money trails, assets and instrumentalities is important.

I found the best practices presented by our speakers and by the participants from the OSCE countries to be extremely interesting and useful for addressing the environments in which trafficking could flourish, for empowering potential victims and for reducing vulnerability. We have been reminded that prevention has to be well targeted for each vulnerable group and environment, at best helpful and empowering for each individual.

The conference has proved once again that every level of society can contribute to the prevention of modern slavery. Especially important is the role of the local communities. The Community of Croydon presented an excellent example of action, which has contributed to changing life in their communities, and attitudes of the local media and government towards the demand for commercial sex in the UK. This type of action can be undertaken by communities in any part of the OSCE region.

I was hearted by the impressive work of the media presented here at the conference, I hope you all had the opportunity to see the movie Sex Slaves film and Not Natasha photo exhibit. I was pleased to hear about how journalists can create an environment where exploitation, discrimination and impunity are no longer tolerated, where people are educated to understand the consequences of the demand for commercial sex and unprotected labour, and change their behaviour. Codes of conduct in international organizations and in the military in conflict settings, and in the private sector, to stop the production of goods and services made with child and forced labour, could be more strictly enforced.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Greek Chairmanship for their support to the anti-trafficking cause, as well as to the future Kazakh Chairmanship to provide continuity and consistency in addressing human trafficking as a priority of the of the OSCE participating States.

Every OSCE Conference is a new opportunity for strengthening collaboration between the participating States, among civil society and among international organizations. Taking into account the OSCE Platform for Co-operation, we strongly support the UN Special Rapporteurs in their decision to develop means and practical tools for collaboration with us partners. From our side we can use our already established forum for advocacy and co-operation – the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons. There were a number of interesting proposals how to move further in this direction, to name just a few steps, such as joint country visits, joint reports, joint statements. I believe our Alliance partners have got a good food for thought which has to be discussed in the nearest future.

Finally,

I would like to thank you all for this extremely fruitful, thought-provoking and constructive discussion, and most of all for your impressive work, your contributions and dedication which are vital to meeting the challenges of modern slavery. I hope and do believe that these two days spent together will help you to achieve much more in your respective countries. Your efforts ensure that each person who is free from exploitation means a rescued life – not less than that. This is precious. As Sasa Lekovic said, “there is no human being we shouldn’t care about”.

In conclusion let me also thank the interpreters and the OSCE conference services for our excellent collaboration.

Thank you.