



HOLY SEE

Intervention of
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to the 11th Economic Forum of the OSCE on
“Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons:
National and International Economic Impact”

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Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to thank the Czech Republic for hosting the 11th Economic Forum on the crucial subject of “*Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons: National and International Economic Impact*”.

This is one of the main issues that poses a serious threat to security and stability in the OSCE region and elsewhere, and it is truly an example of a cross-dimensional problem for which a comprehensive approach is necessary. We are all grateful for the thought-provoking reflections that were provided during the three preparatory seminars of this Forum.

Trafficking in human beings, drugs, small arms and light weapons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity, and is a very grave violation of fundamental human rights. Who can deny that the majority of victims of trafficking are the poorest and most defenceless of our brothers and sisters?

The Catholic Church has long condemned this plague. She is deeply concerned for the most vulnerable and for the innocent victims of this example of man’s inhumanity to man. Many Religious Congregations, Catholic Organisations and volunteer groups, in particular those of humanitarian nature, are strongly committed to the fight against these scourges and in addressing their human, cultural, social and economic implications. Catholic institutions have confronted and denounced the significant overlap between the various types of trafficking, either in terms of organized criminal networks, in transportation facilities and routes, or in financial implications.

The impact of trafficking on the local and global economy is particularly grave: human capital is wasted, the labour market is affected, health-care costs multiply, large grey economies flourish, negative effects on investment climates are registered, corrupt practices and money laundering spread, entrepreneurial skills available are geared more to non-productive sectors, with a consequent decrease of the GDP and drop in tax revenues. Overall, gains are indeed for the few, while losses are for the many.

In Prague we shall continue to work in order to build a political consensus towards measures that would enable the OSCE and its Participating States to achieve concrete results in the joint struggle against these three identified types of trafficking. Let me mention some recommendations, whose implementation could reduce the devastating impact of this activity on national and international economies.

- Information sharing, awareness raising and coordination should increase among States, as well as among the various OSCE institutions and field presences, in order to properly address the existing links among the networks involved. The general public's awareness might also be raised by articles in newspapers and objective TV programmes broadcast in the Participating States.
- Co-operation in export control, border control and customs should be enhanced.
- Stricter legislations on corruption, bank and wire fraud should be developed, and transparency and good governance should be promoted.
- Prosecution and legal structures that criminalize trafficking must be developed and financed, in order to ensure professionally skilled, independent and accountable judiciaries. The international donor community has a key role to play in this regard, to funding efforts towards reform and institution building.
- OSCE States might allow courts to seize and redirect assets of convicted traffickers to the victims and into social and community services. Inter alia, this would result in remarkable benefits for national economies.
- Police training and related materials should be improved.
- The fight against organized crime and education in sound values should be enhanced. Criminal networks are increasingly infiltrating legitimate economies, not only with their currency, but also with their ethics. Education is, therefore, of fundamental importance to effectively counter the negative economic impact of trafficking.

Moreover, the economic, social and ethical deficiencies that favour the flourishing of this activity, in most cases mutually reinforcing among themselves, should not be forgotten: degrading poverty, social unrest, high unemployment, lack of resources for education and human development, negative values and life-style models that are being promoted both by developed societies and societies in transition. It should also be noted that broken family structures turn children and young persons into candidates for traffickers or into traffickers themselves. When society neglects the dignity of the person and the family, when parents do not or cannot exercise their responsibilities in the formation of their children, when the equal dignity of men and women is not recognized and respected, victims and traffickers are being created.

Mr. Chairman,

In Prague we shall also discuss a new OSCE Strategy Document in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Holy See is convinced that this strategy cannot substantially modify the specific approach of this Organization to the problems that affect the security and stability of the OSCE Region. It would also be inappropriate to favour duplication and overlap in addressing problems in the economic field that are already discussed in other international Organizations and institutions.

There is no doubt that the rapid capital market liberalization has contributed to the instability of some member states; therefore it would be necessary to shape the economic and environmental dimension of this Organization in a way that embodies the principle of solidarity among member States and encompasses the OSCE niche with regard to phenomena like globalization and the integration of the economies of the member States. The Conference on globalization that will take place in Vienna next July should be a proper occasion to discuss this important matter and to find appropriate solutions to it.