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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1449th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 November 2023

**On the report by the OSCE Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and
Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

Mr. Chairperson,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to add a few brief comments in its national capacity.

First of all, we should like to extend a warm welcome to the new OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and wish her all the best in this challenging but rewarding assignment. We strongly believe that the mandate given by the 57 OSCE participating States to strengthen co-operation in the fight against trafficking in human beings is in very good hands and that she will be able to fulfil it with great dedication, leadership and effectiveness, building on the excellent work done by her predecessors and with the help of the staff of her Office. To all of them also goes our heartfelt gratitude for having ensured the fulfilment of the mandate with great professionalism during this long period of transition.

New and continuing conflicts within the OSCE area and on its borders, political and economic instability, demographic factors and natural disasters all contribute to the increase in both regular and irregular migration flows affecting the OSCE area and pose new and complex challenges to our security, increasing the vulnerability of groups and individuals and making them more likely to be exploited. We strongly believe in the essential contribution the OSCE can make to the participating States in addressing and overcoming these challenges, thanks to the comprehensive security concept and a unique set of political and practical tools (toolbox).

The work of the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is a concrete example of what the OSCE can do in the face of the pressing security challenges of our times.

We are thinking, for example, of the prompt and effective support given to participating States to deal with the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the BeSafe campaign, which has rightly been described as a success.

We are also thinking of the valuable work in providing orientation and guidance in defining effective national anti-trafficking policies and sharing best practices. In that context, for instance, I should like to mention that the new Italian National Action Plan to combat trafficking in human beings, adopted in October 2022, reflects the important work of the OSCE in promoting and implementing a gender-sensitive approach to the prevention of trafficking and to victim support. Equally important is the OSCE's work on the social track for identifying and assisting victims, in which the Italian experience has been duly taken into account and utilized.

Mr. Chairperson,

There is perhaps no activity more representative of the OSCE's added value and unique contribution to our security than the multi-agency simulation exercises devised in recent years in partnership with the Italian Carabinieri's Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza and now a flagship activity of the Office. As has been widely noted, the first regional simulation for the participating States from Central Asia held in June in Astana is further testimony to the importance and validity of this instrument. Italy is proud to support this initiative, and we look forward to new possibilities of collaboration with the Office in this area.

Thank you.