



United States Mission to the OSCE

Working Session 17 Specifically Selected Topic: Rights of the Child

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Michael Kozak,
Head of Delegation
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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The United States remains committed to combatting the sexual exploitation of children. Child sex tourism, in which an individual from one country travels to another country and while there engages in sexual activity with a child, is a serious concern - and a serious crime. As the United States is a country of origin of the people engaging in such criminal activity, we are leading an international cooperative reciprocal alert program that will warn countries in advance about individuals who may be traveling for child sex tourism.

In February 2016, President Obama signed into law the International Megan's Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders. The law authorized the creation of an Angel Watch Center, thereby providing an express statutory basis for our Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice to inform foreign governments when registered child-victimizing sex offenders from the United States are visiting their countries. The Center may also receive incoming notifications concerning individuals seeking to enter the United States who have committed offenses of a sexual nature. Likewise, International Megan's Law provides an express statutory basis for our Department of Justice's program to inform foreign governments when registered sex offenders – both those victimizing children and those victimizing adults – travel outside the United States, and to receive notifications about sex offenders entering the United States. The Department of Justice's program is carried out by the United States Marshals Service and INTERPOL Washington-U.S. National Central Bureau.

The Angel Watch Center targets individuals who are subject to a sex offender registration requirement based on a previous conviction of sexual crimes against a child and who may pose a potential threat to children abroad.

Through the Angel Watch Center, the Department of Homeland Security uses sex offender registry information and passenger travel data to strategically alert foreign law enforcement partners of a convicted and registered child predator's intent to travel to their country. In Fiscal Year 2015, the Angel Watch program made more than 2,100 notifications to more than 90 countries.

In the Department of Justice's program, the United States Marshals Service's National Sex Offender Targeting Center transmits notifications about traveling sex offenders to destination countries, through the INTERPOL notification system. Currently, this program provides notifications on close to 3,000 traveling sex offenders annually.

The new law also authorizes the Angel Watch Center and the United States Marshals Service to receive information from other countries about sex offenders intending to travel

to the United States, and it directs the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security, to seek agreements and use technical assistance with other countries so that the United States is notified in advance of incoming foreign sex offenders. In addition, the new law requires a passport identifier in the passports of certain offenders with crimes against children in order to prevent such offenders from thwarting the notification procedures by country hopping.

The new law also authorizes the Angel Watch Center and the United States Marshals Service to receive information from other countries about sex offenders intending to travel to the United States, and it encourages the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security, to seek reciprocal agreements and arrangements and use technical assistance with other countries so that the United States is notified in advance of incoming foreign sex offenders. In addition, the new law requires a passport identifier in the passports of certain registered offenders with crimes against children in order to prevent such offenders from thwarting the notification procedures by country hopping.

U.S. laws provide extraterritorial jurisdiction over child sex tourism offenses perpetrated abroad by U.S. citizens. The Departments of Justice and Homeland Security investigate allegations of child sex tourism and partner with foreign law enforcement counterparts to share information regarding international travel of registered child sex offenders and other sex offenders.

The United States looks forward to working with each country here towards the full and reciprocal implementation of this law.

In 2006 at the Brussels Ministerial, the participating States recognized, “that sexual exploitation of children is a grave and large-scale problem throughout the OSCE region and beyond, with multiple, interlinked manifestations of all forms of sexual exploitation of children, including prostitution, child pornography, trafficking in children for sexual exploitation, sex tourism, and forced marriages of children.” We agreed on ways we could work together to address these crimes, and we followed up with a second ministerial decision in 2007 in Madrid that focused on ways to combat sexual exploitation of children on the Internet. In 2013, the OSCE Ministerial Council took a decision calling for “developing and implementing policies and actions, including law enforcement cooperation between participating States, to prevent the tourism industry from being used for all forms of trafficking in human beings, in particular for sexual exploitation of children.” Yet, despite progress over these last ten years, much more needs to be done.

We hope that following the discussions that are taking place here in Warsaw, participating States will discuss whether we might strengthen our commitment to fight sexual exploitation of children, particularly focusing on international cooperation among law enforcement to combat child sex tourism, at the upcoming Ministerial Council in Hamburg.