



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Address by the OSCE Secretary General, Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
at the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons
High-Level Conference on
Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children:
Prevention – Protection – Prosecution
Vienna, 17 March 2006**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you here today to this *High-level Conference on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children: Prevention – Protection - Prosecution*. I would like to welcome in particular the participants of the AGIS International Training Seminar, a dedicated group of specialized law enforcement officials from 39 countries, including 38 from the OSCE Region and Partners for Co-operation, as well as Nigeria.

The ILO estimates that 1.2 million children - both boys and girls - are trafficked each year into exploitative work in agriculture, mining, factories, armed conflict, or commercial sex work, yet numbers do not provide the qualitative explanation of the long term consequences for these victims, as well as for our society in general.

Fighting this horrendous crime of child trafficking, while ensuring the safety and well-being of this most vulnerable group in our society, should remain our common goal if we want to promote human development, prosperity and security at regional, national and international levels.

This High-level Conference is to be viewed as yet another step by participating States to carry out existing commitments and international obligations to curb child trafficking in countries of origin, transit and destination. The OSCE as a regional organization is the natural forum in which political commitments, regular dialogue and co-operation among countries

can contribute to strengthening the exchange of experience and expertise, as well as the implementation of concrete actions.

The OSCE welcomes the recent EC Communication on *Fighting trafficking in human beings – an integrated approach and proposals for an action plan*, which gave special emphasis to establishment of National Referral Mechanism, as it was recommended by the OSCE *Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*. Also, we appreciate very much the Commission's support for continued co-operation with the OSCE and the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons*, which enables us to further strengthen the efficiency of our joint efforts.

The OSCE *Action Plan* is the basis for our institutional anti-trafficking efforts. Ultimately, the responsibility for its implementation rests upon participating States, while OSCE structures and institutions remain ready to assist, in co-operation with our long standing partners in the international community and civil society – present here today.

Of direct relevance to this conference, I would like to emphasize two sets of recommended action, specified under points 5 and 7 of the *Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: Addressing the Special Needs of Child Victims of Trafficking for Protection and Assistance* :

“5. Facilitating special training for law enforcement and direct service personnel on proper and effective methods to identify child victims of trafficking [...]”

“7. Developing child-friendly procedures related to criminal and civil proceedings, from initial questioning to the conclusion of the proceedings which are consistent with the rule of law”.

We are here today to reaffirm our commitment to eradicate remaining problems in these areas, and to call for the implementation of existing agreements and good practices, including those developed at the AGIS International Training Seminar during the past three days, in the areas of:

- Age assessment;
- NGO-law enforcement co-operation;

- Interviewing; and
- Investigative techniques;

In many ways, these best practices echo those identified within the OSCE . For example, the need for establishing National Referral Mechanisms in order to protect the human rights of victims and ensure the effective referral and appropriate services for the child, including the appointment of a guardian.

Child trafficking has been noted as a priority area within the OSCE Region, in particular concerning areas of identification and appropriate assistance in the best interest of the child, and within a victim-centered approach.

In this regard, capacity building of officials and service providers is a key aspect in order to respond appropriately to this problem. The OSCE has in the past three years accumulated a considerable amount of expertise at international level in terms of training and networking. yet, in order to bring about desired change, such practices should be emulated at the national level.

In order to begin addressing the issue of child trafficking in a comprehensive way, participating States must have basic pre-conditions in place , including:

- Allocation of appropriate resources;
- Standardization of procedures for assistance and co-operation;
- Child-specific, appropriate services;
- Trained staff with specialized skills; and
- Child-friendly environments in which to hold interviews

I believe that this conference will play a major role in raising the level of political will necessary for the prevention of trafficking and the protection of trafficked children across the OSCE region.

Finally, I would like to commend the OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit for organizing such a conference in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior, IOM and AGIS

partners, Europol, the Belgium Federal Police, the Swedish Immigration Board, via the Swedish Ministry Foreign Affairs with the support of the European Commission, as well as of the Austrian Ministry for Women and Health Issues under the EU Austrian Presidency. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our OSCE structures, in particular the Strategic Police Matters Unit for their collaboration within the AGIS Project.