



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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

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at the

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Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings for Labour Exploitation:
Decent Work and Social Justice

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Check against delivery!

Dear Excellencies,
Ministers,
National Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Good afternoon,

I am delighted to take the floor again to introduce you to the Second Segment of today's conference. I feel privileged to have this opportunity and I would like to use it to set the scene for an inspiring discussion. In this two-day event our speakers will touch upon sensitive issues and offer different approaches, which do not necessarily reflect the OSCE's or my personal views, and which could even be highly controversial. However, they will never be conventional, and therefore they will foster - I hope - open and fruitful discussion. I would also like to stress what I have said on many occasions. Unfortunately trafficking exists everywhere in the OSCE region. When speakers will refer to incidents of trafficking or exploitation in specific countries, it is often because these are the same countries which are actively engaged on an operational level in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking and therefore provide us with valuable information in a transparent way, and allow an in-depth analysis.

In my speech today I will try to place anti-trafficking action into the broader perspective of decent work and social justice in a globalized world. I will then discuss the reasons for such a strategic approach and illustrate the policy dilemmas that we need to address if we wish to achieve meaningful results in the anti-trafficking struggle. I will conclude by outlining some ways in which we can contribute to building a cultural environment that is hostile to the exploitation of workers, and ready to react to modern-day slavery.

Trafficking, globalization and social justice

Let me start by simply asking: why do we need a broad discussion about trafficking for labour exploitation? Of course it is not the first time international organizations address this form of trafficking, and the OSCE has already taken important commitments in this field. However, I believe it is time to re-think the whole issue. As a matter of fact, trafficking for labour exploitation has been growing, and its massive dimension obliges us to change our perception of the features of trafficking as a whole, and its links with a globalized economy. Globalization has profoundly modified the society and the economy we live in. While globalization has brought immense advantages and achievements, its so-called "dark sides" have also increasingly become evident.¹

In today's world, despite the rhetoric and declared goals, inequalities in income, education, health, opportunities and freedom of choice persist and are even growing; they are a source of immense human suffering, they generate social tensions, instability and crime, and they may also contribute to conflict situations. It is in this context that human trafficking should be seen, to understand why such a horrendous crime can be so easily committed and why it is becoming a systemic component of our society. In this sense a famous quotation from

¹ See for example ILO, *Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization* (2008).

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* comes to mind: "There are no conditions of life to which a man cannot get accustomed, especially if he sees them accepted by everyone around him".² As a matter of fact, what we are witnessing today is a process of "normalization" and growing acceptance of exploitation, which sees millions of people compelled to provide unpaid or very low paid work in conditions contrary to human dignity. Social justice is therefore, in my view, at the core of a comprehensive and long-term strategy against trafficking in human beings.

We have to recognize that lack of opportunities, restrictions or even denial of social and economic rights, as well as political and civil rights, produce social exclusion and vulnerability to trafficking. Organized crime plays a major role in subjugating people by means of coercion and/or abuse, therefore providing business with unpaid or low-paid workers and achieving enormous profits which are subsequently re-invested in illegal activities and the legal economy. This is the reason why the OSCE considers trafficking in human beings to be a transnational threat to security.

The stories of trafficking provide evidence of this. Trafficked persons are among any society's most vulnerable populations. They are poor and socially excluded; they are often migrants with an irregular employment or status, they live outside the protection of the rule of law, are unaware of their rights, lack access to opportunities and resources, and have lost their freedom of choice. They are often women and girls facing discrimination and lacking equal opportunities, therefore disproportionately affected by extreme poverty. In order to survive, these vulnerable people have no other viable option but to resign themselves to their exploiters, being reduced to mere commodities. Their traffickers focus on short-term profits, exploiting them intensively, and replacing them easily when needed.

This phenomenon has grown so much that it is legitimate to talk about modern-day slavery on a massive scale. Of course we are not starting from scratch - more than 15 years of anti-trafficking action have already brought changes and yielded some results in the form of ambitious international instruments, national legislation, regional and national plans of action, national machineries and tireless efforts and mobilization of civil society. Yet, inconsistencies between rhetoric and reality remain long-standing. The limited data available, for example the 4,166 trafficking prosecutions recorded globally by the 2010 U.S. *Trafficking in Persons Report*, are not at all commensurate with the ILO minimum estimate of 12.3 million victims in forced labour worldwide, among which - we believe - several million are trafficked in the OSCE region. Nor are they proportionate to the estimated annual turnover of this criminal business, which approximates USD 32 billion.³

Therefore we ask ourselves, why are the results of specific anti-trafficking policy and action so limited? We usually answer that the key ingredients for change are vigorous political will backed up by adequate financial resources. But is this enough? I wonder. I tend to think that trafficking has become so pervasive that we are obliged to re-think and revise substantial aspects of our policy approach.

² L.Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, (Hammondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1954).

³ ILO, *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour* (Geneva, 2005).

The policy dilemmas

This reasoning has brought us to examine anti-trafficking action in the broader perspective of decent work and social justice in a globalized world. This is why today with this conference we intend to explore some challenging issues and raise policy dilemmas in a number of social, economic and legal fields which are interlinked with anti-trafficking action. How is trafficking connected with the economic trends of a globalized economy? What are the driving factors in certain sectors of the labour market that foster the exploitation of people? How do migration trends and migration policy impact on trafficking?

Labour market policy

Let me start with labour market policy. Looking at trafficking cases that have been investigated, we observe that some enterprises – small, medium or large - which operate in labour intensive and unregulated sectors or in sectors in which labour inspections are difficult or impossible to carry out, appear to be prone to increasing their profits by exploiting unprotected labour. Moreover, academic research has highlighted that those enterprises which are more dependent on economic trends and exposed to productivity crises seem to have developed a specific shock absorber strategy: they try to become more competitive by lowering wages and security standards. In some instances, such a strategy combined with long sub-contracting chains and a supply of labour force by criminal means may well lead to trafficking for labour exploitation.⁴ This is a dangerous dynamic which sees, on the one hand, a progressive erosion of workers' rights along the subcontracting chain in terms of salaries, working hours and conditions, and on the other hand, a growing and abusive role played by gangmasters who control not just access to work but also provide for accommodation and transport to the workplace and charge exorbitant fees for such services.⁵

Domestic work is an example of the connection between under-regulation and extreme exploitation in slavery-like conditions. This is why we recommend signing and ratifying the recently adopted ILO *Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers*.

We can reinforce the prevention of trafficking by introducing a number of labour market measures. For example, one area which deserves increasing attention is the growing role of recruitment and placement agencies working both at the national and transnational level, and often also in an informal manner. There is growing evidence that such services may be used for trafficking purposes. Recruitment agencies often encourage migrants to borrow money to cover recruitment fees and expenses relating to the organization of their trip. This is often the beginning of abusive and fraudulent practices that either directly lead to trafficking or increase the vulnerability of workers to exploitation. Through a combination of wage deductions, payments in kind and debt manipulations, workers end up in a situation of debt bondage in which they have no other option but to submit to their exploiter.⁶ The experience of some participating States clearly indicates that regulating, licensing, monitoring and establishing control mechanisms of recruitment activity is crucial to protect workers against fraudulent and abusive practices that can lead to trafficking. These measures should be developed in co-operation with social partners and should build on existing ILO standards, in

⁴ F. Carchedi, ed. By, *Schiavitu' di ritorno* (Maggioli ed., 2010).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.; see also OSCE OSR, *Unprotected Work, Invisible Exploitation: Trafficking for Domestic Servitude*, Occasional Paper Series no. 4 (2010).

particular on the 1997 *Private Employment Agencies Convention No. 181*⁷. Let me add that we should look at those economic sectors which we know are prone to exploitation, starting with agriculture, construction, and domestic work. Preventive measures should also embed the principle that fees for recruitment are never charged to workers, not even indirectly.

Furthermore, as clearly indicated in the title of this conference, I am convinced that promoting decent work for all is one of the core elements of a strategy aimed at the prevention of labour trafficking. This demands that anti-trafficking actors join efforts more vigorously with the ILO – that has developed the concept of decent work-, as well as with trade unions, migrant rights groups, employers' associations, and other organizations. The decent work concept is complex and includes four main components, namely: rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. I would like to stress the importance of the notion of decent work – which is endorsed in the Millennium Development Goals⁸- and which constitutes a source of inspiration and guidance for a strategic approach to the prevention of trafficking.

At the same time, another powerful prevention measure is the promotion of workers' self-organization and representation. This includes providing information about workers' rights as well as capacity and mechanisms to report abuses and suspected instances of labour exploitation so that interventions can be made. Needless to say, to this end we need a much stronger and active engagement with trade unions to ensure full freedom of association, and to promote the establishment of complaint procedures which are available and accessible for all workers regardless of their status.

Today and tomorrow we will hear directly from representatives of participating States, trade unions, employers and NGOs on how such measures are working in practice. We will also explore innovative ways to address the question of how to maintain supply chains free from exploitation and how to foster codes of conduct as self-adopted measures by business. On the occasion of this conference, my office has released a very innovative background paper – authored by Mike Dottridge - which discusses *The implementation and enforcement of codes of conduct in the private sector to reduce demand for the services of or goods produced by people who have been trafficked*, and which was presented in a side event today. This is a relatively new area of anti-trafficking action and one which is receiving growing attention. I would only like to mention that many businesses have voluntarily committed to human rights and some have adopted measures such as codes of conduct to prevent forced labour and/or human trafficking. While valuing and appreciating the importance of such initiatives, I would like to stress that the main challenge lies in the effective implementation and monitoring of these voluntary codes. In this regard I welcome last week's endorsement by the UN Human Rights Council of the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework*.

⁷ ILO, *Private Employment Agencies Convention No. 181* (1997), available at <<http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C181>> and *Private Employment Agencies Recommendation No. 188* (1997), available at <<http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?R188>>.

⁸ *Millenium Development Goals*, Target 1B, <<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>>. More information on the ILO decent work agenda is available at: <<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang-en/index.htm>>.

Migration policy

Although trafficking also occurs within the borders of one country, in the OSCE region it is mostly linked with vulnerabilities deriving from migration processes. Therefore, let me try to explore one of the most challenging areas, in which we face many policy dilemmas, the area of migration policy. I do not intend to discuss the issue of migration policy in general terms. It is not my task, nor my expertise. But it is time, in my view, to start analysing its connections to anti-trafficking policies, and identify which components of migration policies have a negative impact on effectively preventing trafficking.

Firstly, the policy of criminalization of irregular migration – which criminalizes a migrant who enters irregularly, or remains in the territory of a state contrary to an expulsion order - definitely has a detrimental impact on the willingness of victims to co-operate with the authorities because, in addition to being afraid of deportation, they are also afraid of being prosecuted. Furthermore, criminalization of migration validates and reinforces a negative stereotype of irregular migrants, who are considered criminals for the mere fact of being in an irregular situation. On the contrary, irregular migrants should be seen first and foremost as people who are socially vulnerable, and everybody should be aware that they can be severely exploited. The need to revise the criminalization approach has been recently endorsed by the European Court of Justice, which stated that a Member State’s legislation is precluded from providing for imprisonment on the sole ground that a third-country national remains in the State contrary to an order to leave.⁹

Secondly, I would like to question the widespread assumption that anti-trafficking action is just an aspect of the fight against the so-called “illegal migration”, and the resulting assumption that any policy aimed at stopping irregular migrants at the borders or immediately deporting them once they are found in the territory of a State would automatically strengthen the fight against trafficking in persons. This approach is simplistic and tends to ignore that in order to detect trafficking it is necessary to detect exploitation. As long as the focus is primarily on the immediate deportation of every irregular migrant without appropriate procedures wherein the person is heard and indications of exploitation are recognized, trafficking will not be detected.

Research has documented how restrictive migration policy may have unintended consequences exacerbating vulnerability to abuses and exploitation. Migration management is indeed crucial. In line with the OSCE commitments, we need to work on promoting effective migration management and coherent policies for the socio-economic development, social cohesion and security of all countries. Such migration management should clearly identify among its aims the prevention of trafficking in human beings. In this light, it is crucial to promote regular channels for migration not only for the most educated segment of the labour migrants but also for low-skilled workers.

⁹ Judgement of the Court of Justice of the EU in the case El Dridi (C-66/11) on common foreign and security policy. The European Court of Justices established that articles 15 and 16 of the EU Directive 2008/115/EC “must be interpreted as precluding a Member State’s legislation [...] which provides for a sentence of imprisonment to be imposed on an illegally staying third-country national on the sole ground that he remains, without valid grounds, on the territory of that State, contrary to an order to leave that territory within a given period”.

Furthermore, migration policy should be gender-sensitive. Half of the world's 200 million migrants are women.¹⁰ Nevertheless, migration policies and opportunities are still largely oriented towards men.¹¹ Women are more likely than men to be underemployed in jobs below their education and skill levels, and mostly work in sectors that are thought of as traditionally female. Migrant women, often in spite of their high level of education and skills, are also generally employed in unskilled and unregulated sectors of the labour market such as domestic work, which puts them at a greater risk of abuse and trafficking. In order to ensure better protection of women and girls from risk and abuse, and avoid discrimination and unequal treatment of female migrants, we need to establish and/or enhance gender-sensitive labour migration policies and practices. I call on participating States to step up the implementation of the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/09 on Migration Management, which encourages them "to incorporate gender aspects in their migration policies, noting the recommendations of the OSCE-produced Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies".

In this context, we also need to strengthen the care and protection of children to prevent child trafficking, especially among children made vulnerable in the context of migration both cross-border and in-country. This is the approach that we *Alliance* partners voiced together issuing the Joint Statement on Child Protection, Especially among Migrant, Undocumented, Unaccompanied, Separated and Asylum Seeking Children, to enhance Prevention of Child Trafficking. Let me also add that we need to conduct more targeted qualitative and quantitative research on child migration including on policies to promote safe, child-friendly migration and to prevent migratory conditions that may render children vulnerable to abuse, violence, and trafficking. Research should also examine the impact of migration and border control policies on the protection of the rights of migrant children.

These issues show how deeply important aspects of migration policy and anti-trafficking action are connected. In general terms, a crucial question is: when a migration or police officer, or a labour inspector detects a situation of exploitation involving an irregular migrant, do they see a worker who has been severely exploited or a perpetrator of violations of migration and labour legislation? Does their action result in better protection of the rights of the worker who may not have received a salary for months, or in immediate deportation and - in certain countries - even prosecution of the worker as "illegal" migrant? This is why I call for better analysis at the national level of the impact of every piece of national legislation on immigration and of its potential effects on anti-trafficking action. In this regard, parliamentarians can play a major role to forge the cultural, social, political and legislative environment for an understanding of the plight of exploited workers, as well as to promote solidarity and a human attitude towards them and to promote decent work for all.

International protection

Closely connected with this policy area is the question of ensuring that the fundamental rights of migrants such as the right to seek asylum and the principle of *non-refoulement* are fully respected. Today we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and I would like to take this opportunity to stress that we need to work more to enhance policy coherence between anti-trafficking and refugee policies. The policy dilemma we face revolves around the management of mixed flows of migration and is connected with

¹⁰ OSCE, *Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies* (Vienna, 2009), p. 14.

¹¹ European Commission, *Report of the Experts Group on Trafficking in Human Beings* (2004), p. 147.

reconciling refugee/human rights protection with the prevailing transnational organized crime/criminal justice framework of anti-trafficking action. Put simply, this means building more connections between these two policy areas and ensuring a solid and mutually reinforced human rights-based approach which enhances the protection of vulnerable people, and helps make them more visible. This reasoning stems firstly from the recognition that refugees and asylum-seekers are in a vulnerable situation and often exposed to the risk of trafficking. Secondly, the refugee law and the recent jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights offer new potential for international protection of individuals who were trafficked or are at risk of re-trafficking. Later today, we will hear the perspectives of academics, international organizations, and NGOs on these cross-cutting issues between trafficking and refugee protection.

Victim support and social inclusion

The last policy dilemma – yet one of the most important ones - lies in the following question: what kind of assistance and support measures should be provided to victims of trafficking for labour exploitation? One issue is related to the grounds for assistance and support. According to the OSCE commitments and the Council of Europe *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, assistance to victims should not be made conditional on their willingness to act as witnesses.¹² We know that unfortunately this provision has been so far poorly implemented, especially when migration status is involved, and we welcome the first round of evaluation of GRETA to have a better picture of the situation and discuss how to promote effective and consistent implementing measures.

However, there is another and even more general issue to address. Is the link between assistance measures and the criminal justice response effective in order to ensure support to all victims? As a matter of fact, in the vast majority of national regulation, assistance is linked with the existence and developments of criminal proceedings. Taking into account the limited number of proceedings which are predicated on an indictment for trafficking – as others start with an indictment for less serious crimes – the number of people who in fact enjoy assistance and support is very low, even when there are clear indications of trafficking or serious exploitation, and even when trafficked persons are ready to co-operate with the judicial authorities.

Being a judge myself, I am aware that there are many reasons why criminal proceedings can be terminated, even at a very initial stage; for example the lack of sufficient evidence to support an indictment before a Court which is reluctant to endorse innovative jurisprudence. However, these reasons do not have anything to do with the situation and the rights of the exploited persons. As a matter of fact, these persons lose all their assistance entitlements and are supposed to be deported if criminal proceedings are terminated for whatever reason.

Therefore, we should carefully consider and discuss the possibility of establishing grounds for assistance and support which are not necessarily linked to the legal qualification of a case as a trafficking case, and with the related criminal proceedings. These grounds, which should include exploitation and coercion or abuse, could be evaluated by local authorities or social

¹² Art. 12.6 of the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, CETS No. 197. This provision is reiterated also in Art. 11.3 of the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA.

services, with a recognized role for NGOs – as foreseen in the OSCE/ODIHR concept of National Referral Mechanisms - and should be tailored to the real needs of every trafficked person. The Italian model which establishes autonomous grounds for assistance, has been successful, and shows that there is no real risk that the number of assisted victims spirals out of control.

Secondly, I would like to stress that the ultimate goal of assistance and support measures, which are part of an empowerment strategy, is the social inclusion of the trafficked person. However, in the vast majority of countries, national regulation provides for repatriation of the victim after the end of criminal proceedings, even in cases in which the person concerned has undertaken a process of rehabilitation and has co-operated with the judicial authorities. This approach does not encourage victims to come forward and denounce their exploiters, and ultimately can lead to re-trafficking. A human rights-based approach should primarily focus on the interests and legitimate expectations of trafficked persons, and lead to better regulation, providing for job opportunities in the country of destination, or in the country of origin in case of voluntary return. In simple words, trafficked persons should have a real chance to rebuild their life.

My third point is: what kind of assistance measures are needed in cases of trafficking for labour exploitation? In this field – as NGOs have highlighted - the need for tailored assistance measures is even more pronounced. A high standard of assistance and support measures – including accommodation, medical and psychological assistance - should be ensured to trafficked persons who are traumatized and/or bear serious health consequences of exploitation, sometimes comparable to torture – even in cases in which, for whatever reason, there is no legal recognition of the case as being a trafficking case.

In other situations of exploitation, these high standards of assistance may not be necessary. As a matter of fact, people exploited at work usually primarily need legal assistance and access to remedies to receive the payment of salaries and compensation. I would like to be clear about one point: generally speaking, when I talk about the massive scale of trafficking, I am not thinking of building shelters for thousands of people, but rather about scaling up the scope and quality of legal assistance, and making full use of all criminal, labour, administrative and civil tools to uphold the rights of trafficked and exploited persons. This means engaging the trade unions, NGOs and self-mobilized groups to provide legal assistance to trafficked persons for claiming unpaid wages, and compensation for the moral and material damage they may have suffered. I would like to thank ODIHR, which has been at the forefront of this forward-looking work.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I would like to highlight in very simple and direct words, what in my view is the main approach and message of this Conference.

If we wish to be effective in the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings, taking into account its new features and its massive scale, we have to address a broader area of exploitation, especially regarding migrant workers.

This is really a turning point. Traditionally policy responses to trafficking have been built on the assumption that only a limited number of migrants were trafficked; as victims of a serious

crime, they are entitled to assistance and support and to residence permits on an exceptional basis.

This strategy has not proven effective in practice. Now we see more clearly that we are not successful in protecting trafficked persons if exploitation of migrant workers in general terms remains largely tolerated. The support measures owed to trafficked persons according to international legal standards and OSCE commitments, in practice are only applied to a minimal portion of people who are potentially entitled to such measures. The consequence is that just a few victims are identified and assisted. This is confirmed for example in the European Commission report on the application of the 2004 Residence Permits Directive whereby in most cases only between 1-20 residence permits per year were granted.¹³ We have to admit that these minimal results are neither complying with human rights standards, nor implying any deterrent effect.

Therefore, we have to change our approach. The rights of trafficking victims enshrined in international instruments and commitments can only be effectively implemented if there is no tolerance for any form of exploitation. In this different framework, trafficked persons should be seen first and foremost as workers. Taking into account that exploitation is a sort of “continuum”, we should consider trafficked persons as those bearing the worst forms of exploitation, and therefore being entitled to more significant assistance and support measures, while addressing by different means the whole spectrum of exploitation. Of course this approach implies an in-depth analysis and probably a revision of the cross-cutting issues between migration policy and anti-trafficking action. It is not necessarily the case that all the exploited migrant workers have to be assisted or allowed to stay, but they should be at a minimum allowed to claim their rights including the reimbursement of salaries and compensation for moral and material damage, regardless of whether they have a regular residence status. Furthermore, we need to enable businesses to take responsibility for the behaviour of their staff and subcontractors, in order to prevent exploitation, especially in the supply chain.

The second issue I would like to stress in these conclusions is related to the criminal justice response. While strengthening prosecution, we need to activate other tools. I would like to be absolutely clear about one point: I am not suggesting that we move away from the criminal justice response. On the contrary, I am committed to capacity building initiatives, aimed at enriching the cultural background of law enforcement, prosecutors and judges, and ensuring that investigation and prosecution is conducted successfully on a much larger scale, including in the field of trafficking for labour exploitation. I am convinced however that – also in order to strengthen it - we need to complement the criminal justice capacity by mobilizing further institutional and civil society resources. In particular, enhanced authorization, stricter regulation and monitoring systems in certain economic sectors more prone to exploitation and trafficking, labour inspections, and workers' empowerment measures are powerful tools to identify the worst forms of exploitation, forced labour and trafficking. At the same time, we are aware that especially in the field of labour exploitation, and especially in cases in which the *modus operandi* of criminal groups is based not on violence but on abuse, the legal qualification is particularly challenging. Therefore, we have to ensure that every situation of exploitation not amounting to trafficking or another serious crime is dealt with in terms of

¹³ European Commission, *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive 2004/81 on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities*, COM(2010) 493 final (Brussels, 15 October 2010), p. 10.

civil and labour law remedies. In this respect, partnership with trade unions, NGOs and employers' organizations is absolutely crucial.

To sum up, in order to prevent trafficking in human beings, and in order to support trafficked persons, especially in the field of labour exploitation, we have to promote the respect of the rights of every migrant worker, woman and man, and of every child, girl and boy. And let me say, although it could appear to be rhetoric, that as in the case of the fight against historical slavery, the fight against modern-day slavery requires concrete action aimed at building a more fair society, which is inspired by the ideal of social justice.

Poverty and inequalities are major root causes of trafficking, inducing many to migrate to seek a better life. In receiving countries, they may face exploitation, forced labour and trafficking, in conditions amounting to slavery. We cannot accept that so many people, women, men and children, courageous people crossing the mountains and the oceans to support their children and family, are exploited in our countries. We have to react to this manifest injustice, committed against the most vulnerable.

My message is clear: WE CARE, and we stand by them.