



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Opening Remarks

14th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference

“Ethical Issues in Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking”

Vienna, 4 November 2014

*Dear State Secretary,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am honoured to welcome you to the 14th OSCE *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* conference, which will explore our ethical responsibilities in the context of combating trafficking in human beings. I would especially like to convey a very warm welcome to all the experts here from the 57 OSCE participating States. You have an important role to play, either in person here today or via web-streaming and Twitter. Integrating social media into our work in this way is especially significant for an organization that places such high value on openness and co-operative dialogue.

At the outset, allow me to acknowledge Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova, the OSCE's recently appointed Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings after doing a great job for the OSCE in challenging circumstances as Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. I am confident that she will be consistent with the legacy of her predecessors, fully endorsing a strategic and comprehensive response which takes stock of what has been achieved in the last 10 years of anti-trafficking action. The Secretariat stands ready to support her work and further enhance the dialogue with the participating States, contribute to national and international efforts, and strengthen the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons as a privileged forum for stakeholders' co-operation.

The OSCE has been at the forefront of international efforts to combat trafficking in human beings since 2000, when all participating States formally recognized the threats stemming from this global phenomenon by adopting our first Ministerial Decision on combating human trafficking.

Human trafficking represents both a heinous violation of fundamental freedoms of individuals and at the same time a serious transnational challenge to the security of our societies. It normally takes the form of organized crime, which is often linked to other transnational criminal activity such as drug trafficking, money laundering, migrant smuggling, document fraud and even terrorism. As such, human trafficking sees no borders, generates billions of dollars of illegal profit, and violates the human dignity and the fundamental freedoms of millions of people worldwide.

OSCE's response to this challenge is inevitably cross-dimensional and human rights-based, dealing with the prevention of the crime, the prosecution of the criminals and the protection of the victims. Against this background, international co-operation is – and will continue to be – of crucial importance. Human trafficking, like most contemporary transnational threats, cannot be handled effectively by any state, organization or entity on its own. A common effort is needed, one that is based on joint analysis, planning and action.

This is clearly what this conference is about: joining forces to exchange good practices, to learn from each other's experiences – including failures – and to develop results-oriented synergies. We should strengthen the coherence of our international and national efforts, but also continue to advance the implementation of OSCE commitments.

Over the next two days, discussions will focus on ethical considerations related to human trafficking. We are increasingly aware of how unethical approaches and behaviours can contribute to this terrible crime.

When addressing ethical concerns related to human trafficking in the OSCE context, standards and accountability are essential. We must maintain high standards of behaviour, and take effective measures to ensure that anyone who violates these standards is made accountable.

I am personally committed to doing my utmost to ensure that no OSCE activity contributes to any form of human trafficking. The OSCE – like other international organizations – expects all its personnel to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and to conduct themselves in a professional and disciplined manner at all times.

The OSCE began to promote and enhance the ethical behaviour of its own staff at the same time that the Organization first began to combat human trafficking. In 2002, following instances of human trafficking in a post-conflict environment, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was the first of our Field Operations to issue a specific directive related to trafficking in human beings. In 2003, inspired by this pioneering work, the participating States formally adopted the OSCE Code of Conduct for Staff and Mission Members. This fundamental document, which each OSCE official signs, contains specific references to preventing human trafficking.

In order to ensure that the OSCE is helping to combat trafficking in human beings – and not exacerbating the problem – the Code of Conduct prescribes exemplary standards of personal behavior to all OSCE officials. Moreover, any OSCE staff found to be involved in this ignoble trade shall be accountable to their national authorities.

In 2004, the Secretariat promulgated OSCE Staff Instructions setting out more detailed standards expected of all OSCE officials. The Heads of OSCE Field Operations are called upon to create and maintain a working environment that prevents the involvement of OSCE staff in human trafficking. Any violation of these standards shall be regarded as serious misconduct which may lead to appropriate disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal.

The OSCE operates at multiple levels, with significant work being conducted in the field, including in crisis situations. In an effort to play their part and ensure the highest standards of conduct and accountability of persons serving on international forces and missions, participating States adopted a Ministerial Decision in 2005; this Decision acknowledged that military and civilian personnel serving on international peacekeeping forces or other international missions – including contractors and OSCE Field Operations – could contribute to the demand side of the trafficking cycle.

Recognizing that having links to human trafficking undermines the ability of Missions to fulfil their mandates, participating States have shown a commitment to improve measures to prevent their nationals from engaging in human trafficking. They have also pledged to properly investigate and punish such violations and to assist host countries to combat this crime.

To complement and build upon these efforts, since 2004, all new international OSCE officials and Vienna-based staff participate in training sessions on preventing human trafficking when joining the Organization. More recently, we launched a mandatory on-line training on ethics for all OSCE staff. This training addresses important ethical questions that arise in our daily work – including human trafficking – in a very pragmatic and interactive way.

The 2013 *Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings* is a key document guiding OSCE efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking. It contains specific provisions that are relevant to today's discussion, such as on training medical professionals and social welfare services on ethical principles related to organ transplantation, and considering "zero-tolerance" policies, or other similar standards, in government procurement of goods and services. All of these issues will be addressed during this conference.

In this framework, I greatly value the daily work performed by our network of anti-trafficking focal points in the field. I am confident that all our Field Operations will continue to actively assist their host countries in combating human trafficking. This remains an OSCE priority.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to paraphrase the United Nations Secretary-General when taking his Oath of Office in 2006: *The good name of the OSCE is one of its most valuable assets, but also one of its most vulnerable.* We will continue to hold all OSCE officials to the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior.

Respecting the inherent dignity of each individual is a fundamental value at the core of what the OSCE represents. Thus we must remain alert to the human harm that could be caused through negligence and misconduct, and always be ready to assist the victims.

I look forward to meaningful discussions and I am eager to learn more from your wealth of experience. The OSCE is ready to continue its efforts to prevent human trafficking. I am confident that its role will only be strengthened under the able leadership of Ambassador Jarbussynova.

Thank you.