



STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE

2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working session 9: Humanitarian issues and other commitments, including:
Combating trafficking in human beings – Refugees and displaced persons –
Persons at risk of displacement

Warsaw, 20 September 2018

Mr. Moderator,

Trafficking in human beings is a grave and profound wound to human dignity and to universal human rights, and it continues to represent a major challenge to our region. In a message of 2 February this year, Pope Francis stressed that: “Although we try to ignore it, slavery is not something from other times. Faced with this tragic reality, no one can wash their hands of it without being, in some way, an accomplice to this crime against humanity. We cannot ignore the fact that there is as much slavery in the world today as there was before, or perhaps more”.¹

Therefore, it is vital that combating trafficking in human beings remains high on the OSCE agenda. The Holy See was pleased to join consensus on MC Decision No. 6/18 “Strengthening Efforts to Prevent and Combat Child Trafficking, Including of Unaccompanied Minors”, adopted last year in Milan, reflecting the continued will of all 57 participating States to advance OSCE-based and OSCE-led efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking. Among the many important points made in the Decision, our Delegation wishes in particular to underscore the importance of the “victim-centred and trauma-informed approach”, respectful of human rights, which should guide all anti-trafficking efforts.

The Decision also recognized “the importance of the contribution of civil society, including religious organizations” in prevention efforts. To advance such an ever broader alliance in society to combat human trafficking, our Delegation sees merit in continued discussions on how to further include religious organizations in the advancement of a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach to anti-trafficking work within the OSCE.

On the issues related to migration, and on refugees and displaced persons, the OSCE recognizes “the leading role of the United Nations”.² This in no way denies the OSCE’s key complementary role, but stresses rather the importance of the OSCE

¹ *Human Trafficking*, The Pope Video, <https://thepopevideo.org/human-trafficking/>.

² MC Dec. No. 3/16 - *OSCE’s Role in the Governance of Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees*.

focusing on its specific capabilities and strengths, and avoids simply duplicating what is done by other actors, a point the Holy See has repeatedly made. In particular, there are a number of crucial human dimension issues where the OSCE should give greater attention to the plight of migrants, refugees and displaced persons. These would include the right to life, the rule of law, freedom of religion or belief, as well as specific consideration on the family, notably family reunification, highlighted even in the Helsinki Final Act, as well as women and children.

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to make the following recommendations:

- that participating States continue to discuss how to deal with the many migration-related issues on which the OSCE has a complementary role to play, ensuring that these issues are not excluded due to politicization;
- that the participating States ensure that OSCE executive structures have the necessary funding and staff to comply with the tasks given to these structures in recent MC decisions on anti-trafficking efforts;
- that ODIHR continue its engagement with civil society, including religious organizations, in advancing a broad and multi-stakeholder effort aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and providing assistance to victims.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.