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EU Statement – Session 3: Combating trafficking in human beings, with a particular focus on trafficking in children

Dear Mrs. Moderator

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the views of the EU in such an important issue which has always been a major political priority to us. The EU remains strongly determined to fight human trafficking, a crime which is an affront to human dignity and which constitutes a gross violation of human rights of victims, in particular that of women and children.

The EU has always attached great importance to the work of all OSCE structures and institutions committed to the fight against human trafficking adequately to the lines set by the 2003 OSCE action plan and the relevant MC decisions.

OSCE's commitments to find and treat the root causes of trafficking, to encourage states as key actors to face and address the problem of exploitation of vulnerable people in today's societies responds to real questions and real needs. Addressing in particular the problem of trafficking in children and women is of utmost importance, and fully supported by the Union, as they are often the primary targets of human trafficking and violence.

The emphasized victim-centered approach is not new; it is still, more than ever, of utmost importance. The Decision No. 5/2008 taken by the Helsinki Ministerial Council of the OSCE paid particular attention to the victims and wishes to further enlarge and guarantee the protection and assistance of victims of THB. The EU stresses the importance for States to provide effective access to justice for victims of trafficking, including compensation for the harm that victims have suffered, in particular by ensuring that victims are provided with information and legal assistance. The EU supports the OSCE's engagement to assist countries in their efforts to make justice accessible for trafficked and exploited persons and by doing this, raise awareness.

Furthermore, we also wish to stress the importance of a comprehensive approach and co-ordinated efforts of the participating States to be able to tackle this phenomenon.

In fully supporting the OSCE's commitment to countering trafficking, let me seize this opportunity to also congratulate Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in

Human Beings for the success of the tenth Alliance against Trafficking in Persons conference, held in Vienna, on 17th and 18th June 2010, on the following, very important topic: Unprotected Work, Invisible Exploitation: Trafficking for the Purpose of Domestic Servitude.

Since her appointment in 2010, Ms. Giammarinaro, has tirelessly contributed to successfully lead the organization's efforts in combating THB. The European Union highly appreciates her and her predecessors', Ms. Helga Konrad's and Ms. Eva Biaudet's engagement to successfully fight against THB.

The EU is aware of the attention given to this topic by the current Kazakh OSCE's Chairmanship. We encourage the OSCE to focus today's discussions on child trafficking for labour exploitation, and fully recognize the importance to further discuss the effectiveness of child protection systems, in Astana under the agenda of the Review Conference.

Mrs. Chairperson,

The implementation of policies aimed at successfully combating trafficking in human beings with special regards to women and children is a priority in strengthening the area of Freedom, Security and Justice and the EU's external relations. All forms of exploitation, including the newly emerging ones, such as forced begging and involvement of victims into criminal activities must be eliminated. This objective is an integral part of the 18-

Month Programme of the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Trio-Presidency, too.

The EU has been paying special attention to prevention and the fight against THB and the protection and assistance of its victims. This commitment is manifested in several legislative and strategic documents.

The Stockholm Programme which is to define the framework for EU police and customs cooperation, rescue services, criminal and civil law cooperation, asylum, migration and visa policy for the period of 2010–2014, prioritises fight against THB as one of the forms of serious and organised crime. It underlines – among others – that the strengthened and enhanced prevention of and fight against THB should be based on coordinated and coherent policy response which goes beyond the area of freedom, security and justice and takes into account new forms of exploitation, too.

This year we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. The EU would like to reiterate once more the importance it attaches to the universal ratification and full and effective implementation of the Convention which together with its Protocols constitute a fundamental instrument at the disposal of the international community to fight human trafficking.

Mrs. Chairperson,

In line with the requirements set forth in the Stockholm Programme the European Commission has tabled in March 2010 a proposal for a Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, and protecting victims with the aim of establishing minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the area of trafficking in human beings. It also aims to introduce common provisions to strengthen the prevention of the crime and the protection of its victims. As set forth in the Action Plan to implement the Stockholm Programme, the European Commission is now preparing the new Integrated Strategy on fighting Trafficking in Human Beings and on measures to Protect and Assist Victims. The EU notes with satisfaction the existing, effective cooperation between the OSCE and the EU, which is also clearly reflected in the initiative launched during the Czech EU Presidency on EU national rapporteurs or other equivalent mechanisms. The draft directive also calls for the establishment of the above-mentioned mechanism in every Member State.

Furthermore we would also like to highlight the Commission Communication on the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors (2010 – 2014), published in May 2010 which is in line with the special attention given by the present Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship to child trafficking. The Action Plan aims to give a common approach to this segment of trafficking, which should be based on the respect for the rights of the child, in particular the principle of ‘the best interest of the child’. Protection should be given to all children who need it.

The EU also puts a great emphasis on a fruitful and effective cooperation with the relevant international organizations besides the OSCE, such as the

United Nations with a special regard to UNICEF, the Council of Europe, and the ILO; as well as its partners in third states; for example, transatlantic cooperation with the US is of major importance. We also underline the importance of regional solutions for the prevention of trafficking in human beings and the protection of its victims.

Mrs. Chairperson,

The European Union is strongly committed to and engaged in the fight against trafficking in human beings. In line with this engagement allow me to assure you and hereby announce that Hungary as upcoming EU Presidency will also give priority to this very important topic. We wish to emphasize once again, with regard to the borderless characteristic of the phenomenon, and to the fact, that in a way or in another, each and every European country is affected by human trafficking; strong cooperation and coordinated efforts are and will always be welcome by the EU.

Finally, let me thank the OSCE for its' tireless efforts to tackle trafficking in human beings and to assure the Organization of our full support in the future.

Thank you for your attention.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries

ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

** Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.