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Swedish Presidency of the European Union

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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EU Statement, Working Session 6: Humanitarian Issues and other Commitments I

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the views of the European Union concerning the issue of the fight against trafficking in human beings. Trafficking in human beings impedes the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and constitutes a serious threat to the whole society.

We attach great importance to the work of all OSCE structures and institutions committed to the fight against trafficking in human beings following the lines set by the 2003 OSCE action plan and the relevant MC decisions. Furthermore, we would make a special reference to the MC decision at last year's HDIM which paid particular attention to the victims. We believe that this is an issue, which should be given priority. We also wish to stress the importance of a comprehensive approach and co-ordinated efforts of the participating states which are needed to tackle this phenomenon.

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In this respect let me briefly refer to the Decision No. 5/2008 taken by the Ministerial Council of the OSCE in Helsinki. This decision on enhancing criminal justice responses to trafficking in human beings through a comprehensive approach points to the fact that, despite our achievements, we still have a lot to do to combat this phenomenon, especially in the destination countries. The decision attaches particular importance to further enlarging and guaranteeing the protection and assistance of victims of THB. This approach is also welcome and supported by the EU.

In that regard, we emphasise the importance for States to provide effective access to justice for victims of trafficking, including compensation for the harm, 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.

In fully supporting the OSCE's commitment to countering trafficking, let me seize this opportunity to also congratulate Ms. Eva Biaudet, Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the success of the "[Technical seminar on trafficking for labour exploitation focusing on the agricultural sector](#)" held in April in Vienna and also for the recently held, very fruitful "[9th Alliance conference on prevention of modern-day slavery](#)". The EU is convinced that strengthening prevention is one of the key elements in the fight against THB, therefore exploring every possible way for its effective use should be considered as a priority. The above-mentioned OSCE Conference is in line with our commitment to the importance of prevention.

Since her appointment in 2006, Ms. Biaudet has tirelessly contributed and given new impulses to successfully lead the organization's efforts in combating trafficking in human beings. The European Union highly appreciates her engagement to successfully fight against THB: her commitment to find and treat the roots 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 trafficking in children and women is an approach of utmost importance, and completely shared by the Union, as they are the primary targets of human trafficking and violence. Also, as we have already mentioned, the European Union fully supports efforts aimed at a better protection of victims' rights.

Mr. 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 sexual and labour exploitation must be eliminated, while its newly emerging forms, such as forced begging or removal of organs should also be effectively targeted. Among the most important outcomes of legislative and policy-making work of the EU, let me refer to the:

- framework decision 2002/629/JHA of the Council (19 July 2002) on combating trafficking in human beings;
- Council Directive 2004/81/EC of 29 April 2004 on residence permits issued to third-country nationals who are victims of

trafficking in human beings, or have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities;

- EU plan on best practices, standards and procedures for combating and preventing trafficking in human beings (December 2005)
- The Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2002);

The Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings, which plays a consultative and supportive role in the European Commission's action in the area of combating THB should also be mentioned here, as these highly esteemed experts play a catalytic role in our action against THB. The importance of the Expert group is also shown by the fact that, in 2007 with the Commission Decision [2007/675/EC](#) a second group of experts was mandated to carry on the excellent work done by its predecessor.

Among recent events, the conference "*Joint analysis, joint action: EU National Rapporteurs on trafficking in human beings*" should be noted, which was organised in March 2009 under the Czech Presidency in cooperation with the OSCE. This very successful event discussed the topic of enhancement of the position of National Rapporteurs or other equivalent mechanisms in the 27 Member States. This initiative – alongside with the June 2009 JHA Council Conclusions – also proves the good cooperation which exists between the OSCE and the EU. Not only do we share common goals in combating trafficking in human beings – since the Special Representative also attaches a great importance to the above-

mentioned system – but also take joint initiatives, which, we hope, will result in efficient responses.

The Swedish Presidency is also giving priority to the THB with a special attention to child trafficking. This engagement will be reflected, inter alia, in the proposed revision of the Council Framework Decision on combating THB, which will contain provisions on approximation of criminal law as well as protection and support for victims of THB. Furthermore, it will include a provision on the establishment of National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms to improve the understanding of THB. The Swedish Presidency is also working towards a so called Action Oriented Paper on the EU external dimension on THB. Finally, the Swedish Presidency is organising - in connection with the third Anti Trafficking Day on 19-20 October 2009 - a ministerial conference in Brussels entitled "*Towards Global EU action against Trafficking in Human Beings*". The conference will focus on co-operation within the policies in the EU's external dimension, which is an issue of utmost importance, since THB is a phenomenon occurring also beyond the borders of the EU.

Besides legislative measures, general and specific programmes are also important tools to develop or strengthen policies in combating human trafficking. The financial programme entitled "[Prevention of and Fight against Crime](#)" running between 2007-2013, covers different areas including trafficking in human beings.

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, the Council of Europe, and the

ILO. Effective cooperation has been established in the Caucasus by implementing EU founded projects in the framework of the OSCE. We also underline the importance of regional solutions for the prevention of trafficking in human beings and the protection of its victims.

Mr Chairperson,

The European Union is strongly committed and engaged in the fight against trafficking in human beings. We are convinced that OSCE participating States should use all possible tools from policy decisions to awareness raising to stop this practice resembling modern day slavery, which casts a dark shadow on our societies.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

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