



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Opening Remarks

“Not for Sale – Joining Forces Against Trafficking in Human Beings”

**A Council of Europe - OSCE Conference on the occasion of the
Austrian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe and the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship**

17 February 2014

Hofburg, Vienna, Austria

Dear Ministers,

Dear Secretary General,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues and partners,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Hofburg for this joint Council of Europe-OSCE Conference.

I would like to thank the respective Chairmanships, Switzerland and Austria, for their joint initiative to organize this conference. I personally see this initiative as the continuation of the longstanding OSCE-CoE co-operation and as a concrete opportunity to further enhance our co-ordination in a priority area for both organizations. This event, which brings together experts from the public and private sector, international organizations and NGOs, is a good opportunity to forge stronger partnerships to combat one of the world’s most degrading human rights violations.

During the Ministerial Council in Kyiv last December, ten years after the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, the OSCE participating States

renewed their shared commitment to anti-trafficking by adopting an Addendum to the Action Plan. With this new forward looking document participating States committed to strengthening efforts to prevent and fight all forms of trafficking in human beings, and to further enhancing co-operation at the international and regional level, involving also civil society organizations, the private sector and trade unions.

Also in light of this, today's conference can serve as an excellent platform to engage in further dialogue, to exchange best-practices on prevention, victim identification, protection and prosecution as well as to identify areas of synergy for future collaboration.

In this brief intervention I would like to focus on three points.

Firstly, I would like to emphasise the importance of partnership in combating trafficking in human beings. The gap between the estimated numbers of trafficked persons and the amount of actual criminal cases globally is very worrying. Millions of victims remain unidentified while the vast majority of criminals enjoy impunity. As we know, trafficking in human beings is also one of the most transnational forms of organized crime. It is not enough for each organization or stakeholder to develop individual plans and activities – we must really join forces if we want to close this gap.

The OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is equipped with an extensive mandate to promote the fight against trafficking in human beings. With the support of her Office, she engages in continued dialogue with the participating States to raise their awareness, contributing to national and regional conferences as well as expert meetings to promote the OSCE's human rights based approach to prevention, protection and prosecution. She also works in close co-operation with parliamentarians and the judiciary, building capacities and strengthening support at the national level for combatting this terrible crime as well as with governmental and non-governmental organisations, and often with international partners, especially through the *Alliance against Trafficking in Human Beings*.

Secondly, partnership is not enough: there is a need for greater complementarity of activities. Clearly, there is widespread political convergence when it comes to combating trafficking in human beings. Both the OSCE and the Council of Europe are called upon to provide greater

assistance in a number of areas, including the development of norms and standards, promoting the implementation of legal obligations and political commitments, and providing expertise on demand. Given the scale of the human trafficking phenomenon, the risk of duplication remains relatively small, but we do need to be diligent in fine-tuning our mutually reinforcing and complementary approaches.

My third point is the critical need to take stock of our legal obligations and political commitments and to do our utmost to promote their full implementation. Here, there is another advantage in working together, and we can seek synergies for co-operation not only on specific activities, but also in fulfilling our respective anti-trafficking commitments.

At the end of the day, what really matters is the practical impact these partnerships have on trafficking in human beings on the ground, especially when it comes to the safety of vulnerable people and the protection of victims. This objective can more readily be achieved when goals are shared, recommendations jointly considered, and feedback between our two organizations is exchanged in a direct and constructive way, mobilizing our networks of field presences with targeted projects in order to jointly address the challenge of combating human trafficking at the grassroots level.

I consider the excellent turnout as well as the high-level participation at this event to be good indications of the broad support enjoyed by our joint activities. This will certainly encourage the development of new joint initiatives in areas where we have a common approach and bring added value. I understand that some ideas for joint action stemming from this meeting will be elaborated in the closing session and that there will be an opportunity for interested stakeholders to contribute to a proposed Joint Framework for Action. The purpose of this proposal is to set the stage for future collaboration and enhanced partnership in the four areas that will be discussed during the conference, namely the prevention of all forms of human trafficking, victim identification and protection, prosecution and non-punishment of victims as well as the promoting partnership and co-operation, with a particular focus on the complementarity of reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the OSCE Special Representative, Ms Giammarinaro, for her remarkable dedication and service during the four years of her mandate, which concludes at the end of this month. She and her dedicated team have not only

raised the political profile of the fight against trafficking, but, more importantly, she has managed to put forward a number of lesser-known areas for advocacy and action: raising the visibility of trafficking for labour exploitation and specifically, domestic servitude; broadening the partnership to include especially NGOs and other civil society actors in combating trafficking; promoting the importance of the non-punishment of victims; and identifying the scope and scale of trafficking in human beings for organ removal, among other areas. This is a strong legacy and ambitious work plan which will guide our activities for many years to come.

Thank you, and I wish you fruitful discussions.