



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

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**Presentation**

**at the 953<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

Vienna, 16 May 2013

Dear Chairperson of the Permanent Council,  
Dear Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Colleagues,

Initially I had wanted to start my address to you with a look back at recent history, when a decade ago, in 2003, the participating States adopted the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (PC.DEC 557). But recent events make it my obligation to pay tribute to the victims of a shocking tragedy:

Three weeks ago, over 1,000 people died when a building that housed five garment factories collapsed in Bangladesh, and the death toll is still rising. The workers, mostly women, were paid as little as 30 euros a month and had to work in inhuman conditions in what Pope Francisco clearly condemned as “slave labour” on the 1st of May, Labour Day.<sup>1</sup> The building had been constructed illegally and the factories violated health and safety regulations. The workers, who had informed their boss about cracks in the walls, were forced to work or otherwise he would withhold parts of their wage. The garment factories supplied major brands that we are familiar with and, I would dare to say, many of us have been consumers of.<sup>2</sup>

This was not the first, deadly factory incident in Bangladesh, and it is not an isolated incident. Also, Bangladesh is not the only country in which such incidents happen. Neither is it the only source country for cheap labour in which international labour standards are not respected and human beings are used as slaves. Bangladesh here stands for all other countries in which inhuman working conditions exist and are tolerated.

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<sup>1</sup> Official figures put the death toll on Friday 10 May at 1,021. See [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/world/asia/bangladesh-collapse-death-toll.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/world/asia/bangladesh-collapse-death-toll.html?_r=0). Staff and agencies, *Bangladesh factory collapse: pope condemns ‘slave labour’ conditions* in: The Guardian, 26 April 2013, at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/01/bangladesh-factory-pope-slave-labour>.

<sup>2</sup> See *Textile Industry: Bangladeshi Blood on EU shoppers hands?*, translated from the Dutch by Kelly Bloom, in NRC Handelsblad, 3 May 2013, at: [www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/3744411-bangladeshi-blood-eu-shoppers-hands?xtor=RSS-9](http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/3744411-bangladeshi-blood-eu-shoppers-hands?xtor=RSS-9); Saad Hammadi and Annie Kelly, *Bangladesh factory collapse could force rethink for garment industry*, theguardian, 3 May 2013, at: [www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/may/03/bangladesh-factory-collapse-rethink-garment-industry](http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/may/03/bangladesh-factory-collapse-rethink-garment-industry); Maha Rafi Atal, *The Bangladesh factory tragedy and the moralists of sweatshop economics*, theguardian, Monday 29 April 2013, at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/apr/29/bangladesh-factory-tragedy-sweatshop-economics>; Deborah Orr, *From Texas to Dhaka, economic exploitation continues to spill blood*, theguardian, 26 April 2013 at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/apr/26/texas-dhaka-economic-exploitation>; Staff and agencies, *Bangladesh factory collapse: pope condemns ‘slave labour’ conditions* in: theguardian, 26 April 2013, at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/01/bangladesh-factory-pope-slave-labour>.

The OSCE region, all and each of us, political actors and international organizations, law enforcement, labour inspectorates, prosecutors, judges, trade unions, civil society organizations, contractors, subcontractors, producers, importers and consumers have a role to play to change this reality and work towards a globalization process built on respect for human rights, labour standards, accountability and justice.

It is time to acknowledge that trafficking in human beings has evolved since the international community and States first started to understand and address it. It is time to reaffirm the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and to look back and forward at the same time: to see where our anti-trafficking action has worked and where we have failed, where our efforts need to be adjusted, updated and enhanced.

**High-level Conference “Strengthening the OSCE Response to Trafficking in Human Beings”, 10-11 June, Kyiv**

I highly welcome and appreciate the foresight the Ukrainian Chairmanship has shown in understanding this need and in convening a high-level Conference “Strengthening the OSCE Response to Trafficking in Human Beings” as an opportunity to prepare the groundwork for an OSCE-wide discussion on the elaboration of an Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. Such an Addendum should be based on existing commitments and supplement and update the actions foreseen in the 2003 Action Plan, thus strengthening it as a strategic document that guides the anti-trafficking response within the OSCE. The Addendum should also demonstrate a renewed high-level commitment to the 2003 Action Plan and relevant Ministerial Council decisions and declarations.

**13th High-level *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* conference “Stolen Lives, Stolen Money: The Price of Modern-Day Slavery”**

It is also in light of the need to take a step back, re-evaluate the big picture and have a comprehensive perspective to achieve sustainable results that I decided to dedicate the 13th High-level *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* conference - which will build on the discussions in

Kyiv and carry them further - to the topic of “Stolen Lives, Stolen Money: The Price of Modern-Day Slavery”.

The Alliance conference aims to shed light on a range of financial, social and legal factors surrounding the ongoing debate on globalization, migration, inequality and trafficking. It will explore the nexus between trafficking in human beings and salient aspects of the current debate on globalization, including the interconnection between human trafficking and inequality, importantly those linked with migration, as well as the increasing use of unpaid work to foster the illicit accumulation of wealth, which is at the core of contemporary slavery.

The conference will highlight the economic, social and political costs of modern-day slavery both in terms of the violation of human rights and the dignity of trafficked persons, and in terms of disruption of healthy and legitimate businesses, massive tax evasion, corruption, and erosion of the rule of law. It will explore how the approach of global justice can contribute to defining a comprehensive strategy to tackle trafficking in human beings as an increasingly structural component of our societies and economies, to promote the rule of law and a fairer distribution of resources at the national and international levels, and to identify a range of actions aimed at ensuring legal and economic empowerment, restitution and compensation to trafficked and exploited persons.

My Office is currently working hard together with our partners from the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* to make this event as inspiring and useful as possible for all of you and I would like to encourage you to send experts from the capitals from the social, judicial, political and economic areas to enrich our discussions at the Alliance conference at the end of June.

### **New trends, new responses**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

I would now like to report to you on some other main activities and plans of my Office within 2013 that contribute to the efforts of the Chairmanship and the participating States to confirm the OSCE’s leadership on action against human trafficking widely recognized by our *Alliance* partners.

In an effort to raise awareness about new forms of trafficking and assist participating States in analysing and developing responses towards difficult (and sometimes controversial) issues, my Office has undertaken research and advocacy on a number of key issues for an effective fight against human trafficking: 1) the non-punishment provision with regard to victims of trafficking; 2) trafficking on cases amounting to torture or inhuman and degrading treatment, and 3) trafficking for the purpose of the removal of organs.

I am happy to be able to report that my *Policy and legislative recommendations towards the effective implementation of the non-punishment provision with regard to victims of trafficking*, developed in consultation with the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* Expert Co-ordination Team, has been launched and is now available on our website (and hopefully soon as a publication). I presented the paper at a joint side event with UNODC at the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on 25 April where it received unanimous positive feedback. We know that it is already being actively used by victim advocates and lawyers and I am convinced that it will also be a very useful guide for justice system actors.

My Office is currently finalizing the research on trafficking in cases amounting to torture or inhuman and degrading treatment, which will be launched at a side event at the upcoming *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* conference in June. I am very glad to be able to confirm that both of our partners in this research will speak at the launch - my esteemed colleagues Helen Bamber, the Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation, and Professor Manfred Nowak, former UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and currently Scientific Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights.

I am also pleased to announce that our research on trafficking in human beings for the purpose of organ removal will be launched at the Human Dimension Committee on 9 July. As you know, we presented the initial findings of this research to an all-Committees' briefing in April 2012. As we reported then and is still true now, this area of research is extremely challenging. To the best of my knowledge our forthcoming Occasional Paper is the first research paper in the OSCE region which analyses the modus operandi of these traffickers, as well as the challenges for the investigation and prosecution of this heinous crime, based on actual cases that have been detected - and in some cases prosecuted. Crucially, the paper also examines issues surrounding the protection

of victims as well as the particular needs victims may have, including medical, psychological and long term care.

An area to which I have paid particular attention is the exchange of expertise between, and capacity building for judges. From 5-8 August my Office, in partnership with UNODC and IOM, will organize an international training seminar on “The critical role of the judiciary in combating THB” in Haifa/Israel, hosted by the Golda Meir Center. The training is open to high-level criminal court judges and representatives of judicial training institutions with a role in ensuring the sustainability and replication of training courses. Participants will discuss some of the most controversial and difficult issues judges face in adjudicating trafficking cases, such as the interpretation of the elements of the crime, the irrelevance of consent, as well as the implementation of the non-punishment principle.

I am convinced that the training will contribute to sharing experience, increasing knowledge and enhancing the judiciary’s ability to deal with human trafficking cases. I kindly ask you to encourage your national experts to apply. My Office is happy to provide more information on the training and the application procedure.

On this occasion, I would like to thank all of our Partners in the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* for their cooperation and continuous support and willingness to engage and move forward together with me and my Office on key issues and challenges.

Domestic servitude is one of the most invisible forms of labour exploitation. Domestic servitude in diplomatic households poses a great challenge for the international community to address. I am happy to announce that on 12-13 June, in Kyiv following the CiO High-Level Conference on combating human trafficking, my Office will organize the second workshop in a series of workshops for Protocol Departments of participating States on the prevention of trafficking in human beings for domestic servitude in diplomatic households. The workshop in Kyiv foresees the participation of Protocol Departments from Azerbaijan, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Mongolia, Poland, Slovakia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. The workshops aim, among other things, to raise awareness about and knowledge on the issue and promote the establishment of concrete measures to prevent trafficking in human beings for domestic servitude in diplomatic households. The third workshop will be

organized in the second half of this year.

### **Country visits**

I have continued to pay particular attention to country visits as a tool to strengthen cooperation with and support for on-going efforts by participating States with an aim to identify good practice and challenges and provide recommendations for action to enhance anti-trafficking action based on OSCE commitments. As Special Representative and on behalf of my Office I would like to thank all participating States in which we have conducted or are planning country visits in particular for the spirit of partnership and cooperation which we have received and which made the visits possible and a fruitful exercise with impact at the national level. Currently my Office is finalizing the country visit reports on Azerbaijan and Portugal, working on preparing country visits to Romania and Kazakhstan and looking forward to publishing the report on the country visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina. On this occasion, I would like to thank participating States for the approval of the new post of country visit officer, for which the recruitment is in process and who will be a fundamental addition to our team and strengthen the Office's work in this specific area of assistance to participating States.

### **Common vision, shared responsibility**

The fight against human trafficking doesn't stop at the national border or at the borders of the OSCE region. Our actions need to be local and global, our responsibilities are local and global. The *Alliance* conference will bring us a step further to understanding the related linkages, impacts, responsibilities and action needed. We need a common vision and action based on shared responsibility. Over the last year, my Office has taken numerous steps to strengthen initiatives with our Partners for Cooperation, and I am looking forward to furthering this cooperation and putting it into operation in the months to come.

Trafficking in human beings has been identified as one of the areas for possible OSCE engagement in the process of consultations with the Delegations of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation initiated by the Secretary General in the implementation of the MC.DEC/5/11. As a concrete follow-up, on 8 February my Office organized a Seminar on Co-operation to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region hosted by the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Rome. The Seminar was among the first initiatives that focus on the phenomenon of human trafficking from the Southern rim of the Mediterranean to Europe and beyond. The

discussions and findings of the Seminar allowed us to identify some key priority areas for action based on the principles of a common vision and shared responsibilities of States on both sides of the Mediterranean: 1. Access to justice for exploited and trafficked migrants, including in the context of return; 2. The effective implementation of sanctions, including financial sanctions, against the traffickers and exploiters; and 3. Preventing trafficking for labour exploitation, particularly in some sectors prone to exploitation, such as domestic work.

Tomorrow I will speak at the Third Meeting of the Mediterranean Contact Group on the follow-up to the Rome Seminar, and I look forward to a vivid exchange of ideas with the contact group and the Mediterranean partners in particular and the further concretization of our joint action to combat trafficking in human beings in the Mediterranean region. My Office stands ready to support the Working Group and its Chair in working on a proposal for a Roadmap on Combating all Forms of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region.

With regard to my Office's dialogue with the our Asian Partners for Cooperation, I would like to highlight the 2013 OSCE-Australia Conference on Improving the Security of Women and Girls in Adelaide in March this year which dedicated one session to the fight against human trafficking. I found the Conference to be timely and inspiring. In the aftermath of the irresponsible working conditions and abuse that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of workers, most of them young women, in Bangladesh, I propose that we think about strengthened engagement with our Asian Partners on shared responsibility towards effective corporate social responsibility between our regions.

### **Internal co-ordination**

Ensuring constructive and fruitful internal co-ordination and joining efforts, wherever possible, continues to be a key objective and task for my Office. My colleagues and myself maintain regular information exchange and dialogue with the anti-trafficking focal points in the OSCE structures, institutions and field operations. To take stock of what we have achieved jointly, reinvigorate our common identity and discuss key anti-trafficking challenges in the OSCE region and discuss how to assist participating States in the best possible way in addressing them, on 27-28 June 2013 in Vienna my Office will hold the annual OSCE anti-trafficking focal point meeting.



Dear Colleagues,

I have started my final year as Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. I thank you for your support to date and invite all of you to enhance our engagement and take advantage of my Office even more in the months and years to come.

I would like to thank, in particular, those countries supporting secondments to my Office which currently are France (Junior Professional Officer), Italy (Project and Advocacy Officer) and the US (Deputy Co-ordinator and Public Information Officer). I also express my gratitude to those participating States which are supporting the activities and projects of my Office with extra-budgetary contributions: Austria, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Switzerland, and the United States of America. Last, but not least I also thank those governments who have expressed interested in contributing extra-budgetary funding in the coming months.

Thank you!