



***PERMANENT MISSION  
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE***

**OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING  
(Warsaw, 28 September-9 October)**

**Working Session 6 : Humanitarian Issues and Other Commitments I**

**Statement by Ambassador Yusuf Buluc  
Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE**

Thank you, Ms. Chairperson,

Turkey has aligned itself with the EU statement relating to the trafficking in human beings, but given the importance of the issue, I would like to inform the participants of the efforts taken by Turkey with a view to preventing this contemporary slavery.

Turkey has amended its Penal Code in line with the Palermo Protocol and established trafficking in human beings (THB) as a criminal offence. The list of the means of exploitation consists in prostitution, forced labour or services, slavery and removal of organs, as required by the Protocol. Along with the commission of the offence, those attempting to commit, or participating as accomplice in, as well as organizing and directing others to commit such an offence are held liable to criminal sanctions taking into account the gravity of the offence.

While prosecution and punishment of the criminals are of vital importance for combating this phenomenon, prevention of the crime should be given priority since only the measures taken to this end could help reduce the number of victims.

Moving from this understanding, Turkey established a National Task Force (NTF) in 2002, comprising of relevant ministries and agencies as well as NGOs with whom cooperation protocols have been concluded. The main task of the Task Force is to ensure effective coordination between the main players. Though proved successful since its establishment, Turkey has launched a study to analyze the current functioning of the Task Force and explore ways to increase its effectiveness and efficiency as well as enable it to enforce its decisions.

I will cite a couple of measures taken in line with the decisions of the Task Force:

- The "National Action Plan in Fight against Human Trafficking" was developed by the Task Force and approved by the Prime Minister in March 2003. The Second National Action Plan in Fight against Human Trafficking" has been approved by the Prime Minister in June 2009. The Plan aims at strengthening the relevant institutions combating THB,

enhancing harmonization with the EU Acquis, and implementing sectoral action plans developed in this field.

- Turkey has initiated the project on “Supporting Turkey’s Efforts to THB and Promote Access to Justice for All Trafficked Persons” with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The components of the project address variety of needs including the prevention measures as well as identification and assistance to the victims.
- Safe return home of victims is conducted through the cooperation among the law enforcement officials, NGOs, contact organizations in the country of origin and the IOM.
- Shelters have been opened for the victims Istanbul and Ankara where also free legal assistance is provided.
- Victims are granted humanitarian visas during their stay for medical and legal purposes.
- The tip-off/emergency helpline 157 has become functional since May 2005 in Turkish, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

- Public awareness campaigns have been launched and brochures prepared in various languages have been distributed in cities where the trafficking is encountered at most.

Ms. Chairperson,

While the primary responsibility for combating and preventing trafficking in human beings rests with the participating States, we believe that an effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially children and women, could be taken only through comprehensive international cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination.

I would like to recall that Turkey is state party to relevant international legal instruments to combat human trafficking. Turkey has recently signed the "Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings". Review of the legislation in order to harmonise with the provisions of the Convention where necessary with a view to fully implement the Convention is underway. Turkey will ratify the Convention as soon as the domestic legal review is concluded.

Last but not least, I would like to draw attention to the importance of efforts to discourage the demand that fosters exploitation for sexual purposes. As prescribed in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against THB,

measures taken to this end help reduce the victimization of the trafficked persons. However, such measures should be complemented with those addressing the offer. A comprehensive study on how to effectively address the question of the offer is needed. This holds true and stands legally imperative in particular when it comes to introducing criminal sanctions.

I thank you Ms. Chairperson,