Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

20th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons

Ending Impunity
Delivering justice through prosecuting trafficking in human beings

30 - 31 March 2020
Hofburg (Neuer Saal), Vienna
DRAFT AGENDA

Day 1: Monday 30 March

11:00-14:30    Registration

14:30-15:30    Opening and Welcoming Remarks

15:30-16:00    Keynote Addresses

16:00-16:30    Coffee break

16:30-18:00    Panel 1 – The scope and nature of the problem

In order to effectively counter impunity for human trafficking offenders across the OSCE region, the scope and nature of the problem must first be understood. This includes accepting the stark picture presented by the data, showing stagnated and in some places even declining rates of prosecution and conviction rates, as well inadequate sentences, which pale in comparison to the severity of the crime and the number of identified victims. A multitude of factors contributes to this phenomenon, ranging from the existence of bottlenecks within the criminal justice system, to a fundamental lack of resources and limited political will. Often these factors coalesce to create a culture of impunity whereby it becomes a norm that traffickers go unpunished for THB offences. This panel will analyse the factors underlying impunity in the region and shed light on the obstacles to effective prosecutions. Topics to be covered: the state of affairs; lack of prioritization of prosecution; obstacles (bottlenecks) contributing to low prosecution rates and inadequate sentencing; requalification under other offences.

18:00-19:00    Networking cocktail (TBC)

Day 2: Tuesday 31 March

9:00-10:30    Panel 2 – Working smarter to enhance investigations and prosecutions

The complexity of obstacles contributing to low prosecution rates means that anti-trafficking actors have to adopt innovative measures in order to overcome them. This panel will introduce some of the existing best practices
in this regard. This includes outlining: how investigations can avail of new technology tools and proactive methods to detect both offenders and victims; alternative avenues for identifying perpetrators, such as conducting financial investigations following the money trail left by traffickers; and how cooperation between law enforcement, prosecutors and judges, at both the national and international level can help resolve evidentiary and jurisdictional issues within a case, as well as maximise shared expertise. **Topics to be covered:** Joint Investigative Teams (JITs), co-operation within the criminal justice sector, specialized units, special investigation techniques, early involvement of prosecutors in investigations, financial investigations, technology to assist in investigation and prosecution.

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:30 **Panel 3 – Victim-centred approaches to investigations and prosecutions**

The focus on prosecutions sometimes raises concerns that efforts to prosecute may occur at the expense of attention to victims’ rights, including their right to protection, support and remedies. However, prosecuting trafficking offences is not just about punishing traffickers: it is also fundamentally about securing victims’ rights and access to justice. The panel will discuss the application of the victim-centred, trauma-informed approach to investigation and prosecution. Victims are often left traumatised through their experiences, and this can be compounded by participation in difficult and lengthy criminal justice procedures, reducing the willingness of victims to report human trafficking. This panel will give an opportunity to discuss: the development of victimless prosecution strategies which do not rely upon victim testimony and minimize the negative impact on victims; how prosecutions can provide greater protection to victims by facilitating access to justice and remedies; the application of the non-punishment principle; and the provision of protection against intimidation and retaliation. The panel will also highlight ways to support victims in the criminal justice process. **Topics to be covered:** protecting and restoring victims’ rights – including the right to information, facilitating access to justice, legal assistance and compensations, working with victims, developing strategies that do not rely upon victim testimony and minimize the negative impact on victims, applying the non-punishment principle, providing protection against intimidation and retaliation.

12:30-14:45 Lunch Break – Side-events to be held during the lunch break.

15:00-16:30 **Panel 4 – Recommendations for the way forward**

Prosecution of trafficking cases is highly specialized, labour-intensive, time-consuming and often under-resourced in comparison to other crimes. This panel will outline the practical ways in which laws and policies can be adapted to best contribute to increased and more effective prosecutions. This will include a discussion on investing in an environment that enables effective prosecution and strengthens the implementation of the Palermo Protocol and relevant OSCE commitments. Panellists will share forward-looking recommendations to address challenges presented in previous panels. The
panel will also look at good policy practices, examining those addressing various forms of exploitation, and treating the users as offenders. Finally, the panel will discuss how national prosecution strategies can be more effectively tailored to provide enhanced prosecutions on the ground and draw greater investment from national authorities. **Topics to be covered:** examples of effective national strategies to enhance prosecution and tackle bottlenecks; policy and legislative recommendations on a solution-oriented way-forward.

16:30-17:00  Closing remarks