



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Presence in Albania

**HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT OPENING CEREMONY OF
SIMULATION-BASED TRAINING "INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF
TRAFFICKING OF HUMAN BEINGS IN ALBANIA"**

Tirana, 18 October 2021

I am honoured to meet you all here today and officially open the first-ever simulation-based training on combatting human trafficking to be held in Albania.

The OSCE Presence in Albania has long prioritized the fight against trafficking of human beings, and this simulation-based training encapsulates many core elements of our commitment – to pursuing a human-rights based, victim-centred approach, to advancing multi-stakeholder, inter-institutional co-ordination, to applying cutting edge tools to develop capacities and respond.

It is no coincidence that this training is launched today, on the occasion of the European anti-trafficking day, which serves as a special day to raise awareness on trafficking in human beings and increase the exchange amongst the different stakeholders working in this field.

This simulation-based training is organized in close co-operation with the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, drawing on an innovative methodology, which my esteemed colleagues will tell you more about in the following sessions. It is our honour to be able to welcome, in-person, our colleagues from the Special Representative's Office, with whom we have worked so closely in the preparation of this simulation. And we will hear from Valiant Richey, the Special Representative, by video later this morning.

I would also like to thank Madame Deputy Minister of Interior, Romina Kuko, and Madame Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection Denada Seferi, whose institutions are longstanding partners of the Presence in Albania's work against trafficking in human beings. I appreciate their and the Government of Albania's commitment to this exercise, and to supporting the participation of many of you gathered here.

I would also like to acknowledge the government of the United Kingdom for its generous funding for this activity, which is organized in the framework of the Anti-Human Trafficking programme, implemented by a consortium of organizations led by UNICEF Albania. Here too, I would express appreciation for the commitment of both the British Embassy in Tirana and UNICEF Albania, including, respectively Justice and Home Affairs Officer and Climate Attaché Harriet Morgan and UNICEF Representative in Albania Roberto de Bernardi, who are here with us today, to see this simulation-based exercise carried out in the best means possible. Indeed, this simulation is a long-time coming. Plans have been interrupted, delayed, and modified repeatedly in these last 18 months due to the pandemic, as experts have worked to ensure that this training can be conducted in the most effective and safest way possible. But we persisted, as it was important that we be able to gather participants together, to be able to put

into practice new approaches, new tools, new manners of communicating and co-operating. In these days, you will engage in real-time, simulated scenarios, through which you will learn how to identify and investigate human trafficking and assist trafficked persons in a victim-centred and human rights-based manner.

So often, we discuss trafficking in human beings as a crime – a terrible crime – but I'd like to remind us all that trafficking in human beings is, first and foremost, a violation of human rights, and we all carry a deep responsibility to counter this tragic scourge. We are all aware of the substantial complexities in prosecuting and convicting human trafficking and in this particular crime; investigations must respect the rights of the victims at every stage of the proceeding. So much preparation has gone into this training, but it will only be successful with the full engagement and participation of you, our dedicated participants. I urge you to bring to these days the same attention and commitment that you would in your daily jobs – as police, as prosecutors, as social workers, as inspectors, as activists. Many of you have been nominated to be here by your respective institutions; your active participation reflects perfectly the priority the OSCE, the government of Albania, civil society, and you yourselves place on countering human trafficking.

Indeed, no institution or individual can work alone in tackling trafficking in human beings. As in every common challenge the solution is never in me, but is always in me. Just a few months ago, I was honoured to co-host a conference on the multi-stakeholder response to trafficking in human beings with Special Representative Valiant Richey, where we drew special attention to the need for invigorated efforts to identify cases of potential trafficking victims and ensure proper referral and assistance. This requires enhanced co-operation between the police and all actors involved, including NGOs, in identifying, informing and protecting victims of trafficking in human beings, and providing humane treatment of victims throughout the investigation and criminal proceedings.

Before I reach a conclusion I would like to express a gratitude to all colleagues, members of government, all parties involved, and a especial gratitude to my fantastic staff members, to my colleagues in the Presence here in Albania. I am sure that our collective and joint dedication will bear tangible and very meaningful results, and I can't wait to see the takeaways from this simulation-based exercise.

Thank you very much!