



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator
for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

21st Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons

Confronting Demand

Tackling a root cause of trafficking in human beings

14-16 June 2021

Hofburg (Vienna, Austria) and via Zoom (upon registration)

CONCEPT NOTE

THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference is an annual gathering of key stakeholders from across the OSCE region aiming to raise the political profile of the fight against trafficking in human beings (THB) and discuss emerging topics and trends in this area. With participation from national authorities, as well as international and civil society organizations, the Alliance helps to co-ordinate and amplify the efforts of all stakeholders toward the common goal of preventing and combating human trafficking. Since its establishment in 2004 as a framework for advocacy and co-operation, the Alliance has supported OSCE participating States in developing a robust, harmonized approach to combat THB that seeks to protect human rights, security, the rule of law and good governance throughout the region.

THE FOCUS

The 21st Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons will put a spotlight on addressing demand as a means of prevention – and specifically on discouraging the demand that fosters trafficking for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation as a core, long-term strategy towards ending THB. The conference will aim to raise high-level attention to the international obligations States have to discourage that demand, discuss the value of this approach as a method of prevention, provide States with knowledge of effective tools, and offer guidance on how to implement such tools in order to meet their international obligations and commitments.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

To successfully combat THB, its root causes must be addressed. The demand that fosters exploitation that leads to trafficking is a primary root cause of THB: by creating a lucrative market for goods and services produced by or extracted from trafficked persons, demand provides traffickers with the economic motivation for pursuing the crime. In doing so, demand also serves as a direct and indirect cause of harm to victims, as it creates the rationale for their exploitation, and places them in situations that cause physical, mental and emotional trauma as well as other harms. Discouraging demand is therefore critical in both protecting victims from harm and addressing the business model of trafficking.

The financial scale of demand that fosters exploitation is immense. THB generates an estimated \$150 billion in profit for traffickers each year, of which approximately 95% is related to trafficking for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation.¹ The market for goods and services produced by or extracted from victims generates a substantial incentive for traffickers to identify and exploit new victims. Yet while this money is paid **to** traffickers, it is paid **by** users of trafficking victims and purchasers of good and services produced by trafficking victims.

To stop this cycle of exploitation from occurring, and prevent vulnerable persons from becoming trafficked, **methods of prevention must be enacted which proactively counter and reduce the commercial incentives for trafficking, including the demand for goods and services which can be produced by or extracted from trafficking victims.** In short, the entities and individuals who knowingly or unknowingly purchase goods and services from trafficking victims, e.g. citizens, companies and governments, must stop doing so if efforts to eradicate THB are to be successful.

In outlining methods of prevention, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol), 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human

¹ The ILO estimates that of the \$150.2 billion generated by trafficking in human beings, \$99 billion is the result of forced sexual exploitation with \$43.4 billion the result of labour exploitation (Source: Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour, Geneva, May 2014).

Beings, the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human beings and Directive 2011/36 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims all recognize the role of demand as a root cause of THB. Specifically, the Palermo Protocol calls on State parties “**to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking**” through the adoption or strengthening of legislative, educational, social, cultural or other measures, including through bilateral and multilateral co-operation.² The OSCE participating States have further emphasized the importance of countering demand for various forms of trafficking through the adoption of subsequent Ministerial Council Decisions and Declarations. The 2011 Ministerial Declaration on Combating All Forms of Human Trafficking (MC.DOC/1/11/Corr.1) affirmed States “will increase and support prevention efforts by focusing on the demand that fosters all forms of trafficking and the goods and services that result from trafficking in persons”. Likewise, the 2017 Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening Efforts to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings (MC.DEC/6/17) committed States to “Identify, develop and share best practices... for successful national and global partnerships between the public and private sector in combating human trafficking, to promote respect for human rights and corporate social responsibility, including through public awareness-raising about the risk of human trafficking in production and sources of goods and provision of services”. These documents reaffirm the need for State-led efforts to discourage the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings.

To fulfil these legal obligations and political commitments, States must adopt and implement effective measures to discourage demand, in particular the demand that fosters trafficking for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation, **paying close attention to relevant market characteristics, gender dynamics, and harm to victims**. In doing so, States have a broad range of options at their disposal, with specific toolboxes for each form of exploitation. In the area of trafficking for forced labour, methods of prevention include, for example, supply chain risk management techniques which can mitigate the risk of States and businesses purchasing or importing goods and services produced by or extracted from trafficking victims. With regard to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, education and awareness programmes, online forms of deterrence and disruption, and different means of criminalization are all possible ways of discouraging demand. Regardless of the methods chosen however, it is only through enhanced implementation that States can dismantle the business model of THB, undermining the financial incentives for traffickers and ultimately ending the harm to victims.

THE OBJECTIVES

The programme of the Alliance Conference will encourage participants to discuss the prevention of THB by examining the role of demand in fostering THB, methods for States to address demand, and the benefits of doing so. The high level Conference will seek to achieve the following goals: i) raise awareness of what constitutes demand, its function as a root cause of THB, and its inclusion in prevention strategies; ii) improve understanding of solutions for States to discourage the demand that fosters trafficking for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation; and iii) outline potential next steps for States to implement their international obligations and commitments to discourage demand. In doing so, the conference will promote the full and effective implementation of relevant OSCE commitments and recommendations, including relevant Ministerial Council Decisions.³

² 55 of the 57 OSCE participating States are parties to the Palermo Protocol.

³ Relevant OSCE MC decisions include: Strengthening Efforts to Prevent and Combat Child Trafficking, Including of Unaccompanied Minors (MC.DEC/6/18), Strengthening Efforts to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings (MC.DEC/6/17), Strengthening Efforts to Combat All forms of Child Trafficking, Including for Sexual Exploitation, as well as Other Forms of Sexual Exploitation of Children (MC.DEC/7/17), Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children On the Internet (MC.DEC/9/07), Enhancing Efforts To Combat Trafficking In Human Beings, Including For Labour Exploitation, Through A Comprehensive And Proactive Approach (MC.DEC/14/06), Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children (MC.DEC/15/06), 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (MC.DEC/14/04), The Special Needs For Child Victims Of Trafficking For Protection and Assistance (MC.DEC/13/04), Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (MC.DEC.2/03), the

THE AUDIENCE AND FORMAT

The Conferences of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons are attended by representatives of the 57 OSCE participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation, major international organizations and NGOs which are partners in the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, as well as civil society, media, the private sector, academia and relevant professional networks of national anti-trafficking practitioners. In addition to traditional anti-trafficking stakeholders, the 21st Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons will seek the participation of stakeholders relevant to its theme of prevention and the demand that fosters trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation, such as Ministries of Labour, Economy and Social Welfare, public procurement bodies, and agencies responsible for monitoring online forms of exploitation. Due to current limitations on large scale indoor events and international travel brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 21st Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons will be conducted primarily online and bring the OSCE anti-trafficking community together via videoconference, with a limited in-person component for Vienna-based delegations and OSCE staff. Active participation during the discussion sessions and via Twitter - @osce_cthb, #CTHB21 – is highly encouraged. Ahead of the Alliance, participants can use the hashtag #askOSCE to ask questions to the speakers. More information is available at: <http://www.osce.org/event/alliance21>

Ministerial Declaration on Combating All Forms Of Human Trafficking (MC.DOC/1/11/Corr.1), and the 2013 Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: One Decade Later (PC.DEC/1107/Corr.1).