



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by Eva Biaudet, Special Representative/Co-ordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

As prepared for delivery by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 22, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We thank Special Representative Eva Biaudet for her statement and for the annual report.

The report highlights the activities of the Special Representative this year and gives recommendations on issues she believes should be of priority for the OSCE, and we appreciate those recommendations, as well as those from other OSCE structures involved in anti-trafficking activities.

We agree with several of Ms. Biaudet's priorities. Victim identification is one of those priorities. If victims are not properly identified, they cannot be protected or assisted. Too often law enforcement officers, social workers, health workers, and others likely to come into contact with trafficking victims are not adequately trained. We hope that the OSCE can continue to make headway in this field, including through providing States assistance in training those most likely to come in contact with trafficking victims.

Another priority should be to address factors that make individuals vulnerable to traffickers. Discrimination, domestic violence, being a runaway or an orphan, drug use, and many other factors contribute to the trafficking cycle. These underlying factors also play a part in the increasing reports of re-trafficking - that is, victims who return to the trafficking cycle despite having been freed from it. We hope that here too, the various OSCE structures can assist participating States.

We agree with Ms. Biaudet that there could be more focus on child victims of all forms of trafficking. This could include child sex tourism and sexual exploitation of children through the internet.

We also agree that States should identify dedicated human and financial resources to address the problem, including measures to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-trafficking policies and programs.

We note that Ms. Biaudet has visited several countries this year to assess their anti-trafficking efforts and determine whether OSCE support could be useful. We support this outreach as an important focus of the Special Representative's work. We hope that through these visits, Ms. Biaudet can match the needs of a specific country to potential sources of OSCE assistance. In this regard, we are looking forward to information on follow-up activities resulting from these visits.

While we agree that conferences can help to raise awareness and political will, we also believe that the Office of the Special Representative should be working with other OSCE structures to provide participating States with concrete assistance, such as training programs. Ensuring a balance between the two will, we believe, further OSCE efforts in this important area.

We also note the strong engagement of the Special Representative in working with other Organizations as indicated in the report. Coordination with other Organizations is a clear part of Ms. Biaudet's mandate. We must ensure, however, that this coordination involves areas where there is a clear role for the OSCE and full support by all 56 participating States. For example, during recent consultations between the OSCE and COE, "it was agreed to move from simple participation in each other's events to joint actions, as was recommended by a considerable number of participating States." We would remind everyone that under PC decision 637, the Co-ordination Group acts under the supervision of the decision-making bodies, not on the recommendation of some participating States.

Similar care must be taken when addressing the Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, since most OSCE States have not signed it and many have refused to refer to it in OSCE decisions because they do not support this Convention.

Again, we thank the Special Representative for this report. Combating trafficking in persons remains a high priority for the United States, and we believe the OSCE can play an important role in assist all OSCE States in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.