Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2011
Republic of Cyprus
Statement delivered during working session 17,
Humanitarian issues and other commitments II
6 October 2011

Cyprus thanks Special Representative and coordinator for combatting trafficking in human beings, Ms. Giammarinaro, for her tireless efforts on this issue since her appointment.

Cyprus, as a destination country for victims of trafficking, takes this heinous crime very seriously and is committed to the fight against it. The most recent framework of measures adopted in this regard is the 2010-2012 National Action Plan, whose implementation depends on the efforts of several government departments and is currently underway. This is complemented by a new European Union Directive on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, adopted in March of this year.

Our continuous efforts at a national level to combat trafficking have taught us that this crime is persistent and complex, underpinned by sustained supply and demand. We are under no illusion that measures and policy-making well beyond law enforcement are needed just as much as a robust criminal justice approach to the issue. Victim identification and support and public awareness-raising are particularly important components of any strategy.

I have noted and would like to thank the US delegation for the references to Cyprus contained in its statement here today. Indeed, my government is cognizant of the need for a more dynamic response and its intention is to pursue more rigorous prosecution of traffickers. National judges and prosecutors are about to undergo special training in this regard with the assistance of US prosecutors and NGOs.

Lastly, madam moderator, I wish to stress the importance of international co-operation in combatting transnational organized crime such as trafficking, addressing its root causes, and prosecuting perpetrators. This makes discussion of the issue in international and regional organisations, indispensible.