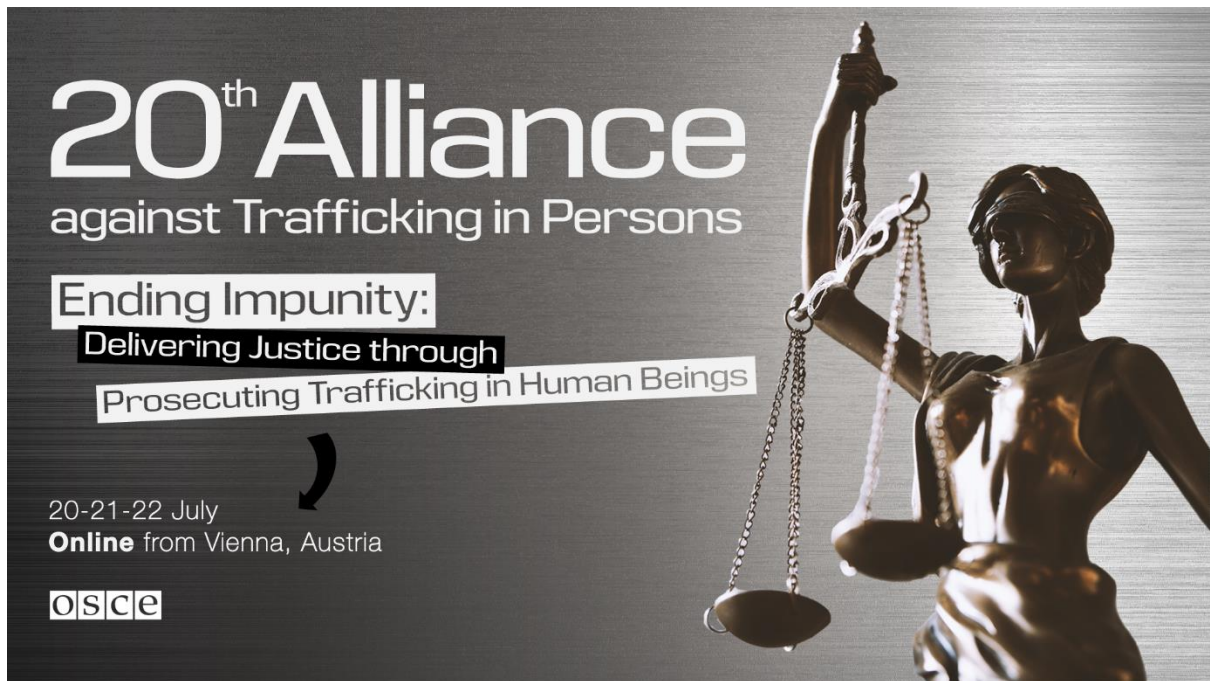




Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**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

20-22 July 2020

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

CONCEPT NOTE

THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance against Trafficking in Persons is an informal platform for advocacy and co-operation that includes international and civil society organizations. The Alliance was launched in 2004 to combine and co-ordinate the efforts of all its partners behind the common goal of preventing and combating human trafficking. Acting as a framework to improve synergies, the Alliance also supports the OSCE participating States in establishing a harmonized approach to combat this heinous crime which violates human rights and undermines the rule of law, human security and good migration governance throughout the region.

THE FORMAT

Held annually, 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 prosecutors, judges and law enforcement officials. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the 20th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons will for the first time be conducted primarily online and bring the OSCE anti-trafficking community together via teleconference, with a limited in-person component for Vienna-based delegations and OSCE staff. Active participation during the discussion sessions and via Twitter - @osce_cthb, #CTHB20 – will be highly encouraged. Ahead of the Alliance, participants can use the hashtag #AskOSCEAlliance to ask questions to the speakers. More information is available at: <http://www.osce.org/event/alliance20>

THE BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings calls on participating States to criminalise human trafficking, to form effective law enforcement and criminal justice responses to the crime, to co-operate with other participating States to this effect, and to guarantee the assistance to and protection of witnesses and victims in the criminal justice system. The sum effect of these measures should entail that perpetrators of human trafficking are prosecuted and convicted, and that victims of human trafficking are accorded the justice they are entitled to.

Despite a robust legal framework on combating trafficking in human beings, **impunity remains widespread across the OSCE region and only a small number of victims of trafficking receive justice for the harm they endured.** Data collected over the past three years shows a steep decline in the number of prosecution cases while the number of identified victims grows. Consequently, there is a large disparity between a high number of estimated victims,¹ a much lower number of identified victims,² and an extremely low rate of prosecutions and convictions.³ Although the prosecution of traffickers is a cornerstone of the long-term effort to end Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), the criminal justice sector suffers from a number of challenges, including lack of resources, insufficient

¹ Estimated by the ILO to be 24.9 million (Source: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, Geneva, September 2017).

² UNODC reported data on 63,251 identified victims of trafficking from 106 national governments (Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016, New York, 2016).

³ The 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report shows a 52% decrease in prosecutions between 2015 and 2018 within Europe (Western Europe, Southeastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus), despite the number of trafficking victims identified within the area increasing by over 51%. Data within the report also shows that between 2015 and 2018, Europe averaged just 1,500 convictions per year, despite identifying over 13,500 victims per annum.

training and innovation, and limited political will. If perpetrators of THB do not face a credible risk of being convicted and sentenced proportionally to the seriousness of their crimes, there will be nothing deterring them from further offending.

Throughout the conference, **prosecution will be examined as a multifaceted process which includes both law enforcement and judicial actors and which requires a proactive and victim-centred approach.** Efforts will be made to further promote the full and effective implementation of relevant OSCE commitments and recommendations, including relevant Ministerial Council Decisions, namely Enhancing Criminal Justice Responses To Trafficking In Human Beings Through A Comprehensive Approach (MC.DEC/5/08), Enhancing Efforts To Combat Trafficking In Human Beings, Including For Labour Exploitation, Through A Comprehensive And Proactive Approach (MC.DEC/14/06), 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) and the 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).

Furthermore, the event will mark 20 years since the adoption of the first OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on Enhancing the OSCE's efforts to combat trafficking in human trafficking (MC(8)/1) in 2000. As 2020 also marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime i.e. the "Palermo Protocol", the Conference will further serve as a forum to discuss and emphasise the obligations coming under the Protocol as related to prosecution, as well as take stock of progress made over the last two decades.

THE FOCUS

In response to the declining rate of prosecutions of THB across the OSCE region, the 20th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons aims to launch a renewed impetus to increase the number and improve the quality of prosecutions. This year's high-level conference will frame the challenges and opportunities to make investigation and prosecution more effective and discuss linkages between prosecution of offenders and protection of victims before, during and after criminal proceedings. It will also highlight good practices, including creative and innovative methods that can bring about positive impact and effectively combat THB crimes. A special emphasis will be put on ways to work smarter, including availing of technology tools, financial investigations, partnerships, proactive investigation methods and prosecution strategies which do not require the testimony of victims.

THE AGENDA

The programme of the Alliance Conference will encourage participants to reflect on strategies for countering impunity and enhancing prosecutions and the rule of law with a victim-centred approach. It will focus on the following goals: i) revitalize political will of participating States and Partners for Co-operation to combat all forms of trafficking in human beings by increasing their efforts to prosecute THB; ii) increase knowledge and understanding of the need to involve all relevant anti-trafficking stakeholders to achieve sustainable results; iii) promote effective and innovative approaches and partnerships to enhance the prosecution of crimes of trafficking in human beings; and iv) advance the implementation of OSCE anti-trafficking commitments, particularly on the topic of prosecution.