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STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO REPORT BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
AND CO-ORDINATOR FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 14 October 2022

Mr Chair,

Norway warmly welcomes the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and thanks him for his report.

We appreciate the assistance the Special Representative has offered to Ukraine, neighboring states, as well as transit and destination states of refugees, after the Russian invasion. Millions of people have been forced to flee the war, mostly women and children, and they are now very vulnerable to trafficking. His call to participating States for stronger cooperation and coordination has been important in raising awareness of the increased risks which are a result of the Russian aggression. Combatting trafficking in human beings is both a security issue and a human rights issue, and we share his view that it is crucial to address the demand fostering exploitation.

Norway strongly supports the Special representative's victim-centered, human rights-based approach, which focuses on effective protection systems and durable solutions that are both inclusive and comprehensive. We recognize that these efforts require resources, adequate policies and laws, and effective structures, as the Special Representative rightly outlined.

Norway continues to develop ways to prevent trafficking in human beings to and in Norway. The government released a new action plan earlier this month with measures against poor working conditions and exploitation of foreign workers. The plan underlines the vulnerabilities of Ukrainian refugees in Norway. Several of the measures in the plan will contribute to safeguarding this group.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank Mr. Richey and his competent team once again for the visit they made to Norway in September, and for the valuable insights and recommendations shared with our national experts.

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During his visit, the Special representative met with relevant representatives from the many authorities involved in anti-trafficking work in Norway. This allowed for open and frank discussions where the Special Representative could suggest changes and provide solid advice on new initiatives, building on experiences, best practices and lessons learned from other OSCE states. We look forward to the final report on the findings from the visit and further recommendations.

Let me also, as Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, thank the representative and his staff for valuable contributions to our meetings this year. The issue of trafficking in human beings has had relevance in a vast array of topics discussed by the Committee, from children in armed conflict, and women in armed conflict, to the role of civil society, and local authorities related to a wide arrange of issues under the human dimension during conflicts.

We encourage all participating States to make constructive use of the competence of the Co-ordinator's office and the OSCE toolbox in general.

Thank you.