



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
TO THE OSCE
VIENNA

1285th meeting of the Permanent Council
Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus
Ambassador Elena Rafti
in response to the Report by the OSCE Special Representative and
Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
15th October, 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to join other Delegations in warmly welcoming Mr. Valiant Richey back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his Report.

The Republic of Cyprus fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like, however, to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Cyprus has prioritised combating trafficking in human beings, enacting a solid legal framework for combatting trafficking in human beings that covers all forms of trafficking as indicated in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol. This covers trafficking for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation as well as forced begging among others.

The main pillars of the 2019-2021 National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons of Cyprus, focus on suppressing the crime of trafficking, prosecuting the perpetrators, protecting and supporting victims, and preventing trafficking. The Action Plan, which has been prepared by a Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group which is composed not only of relevant government departments, but also a number of NGOS, remains under constant monitoring and assessment so as to take into account recommendations by GRETA (the Council of Europe Committee of Experts) and the OSCE.

In 2019, our legislation on combatting trafficking was amended so as to remove recourse to mitigating arguments, which was an obstacle to successful prosecution of perpetrators. This development along with enhanced efforts, thorough investigation and meticulous evidence gathering, have led to more stringent and lengthier sentences being imposed in trafficking cases. Action and measures have also been taken to strengthen the protection and support provided to victims, especially to children, such as increased allocation of funds for the establishment of shelters and care centres.

Mr. Chairperson,

This year we mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, the Palermo Protocol. Cyprus reaffirms its commitment to continue actively supporting actions and initiatives in multilateral fora in efforts to combat human trafficking. Cyprus has over the years contributed to the UN Voluntary Trust for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, to efforts undertaken by UNODC by contributing to the Global Programme Against Trafficking in Persons, and to the anti-trafficking efforts by the OSCE, where Cyprus contributed to the “Med Project”, a simulation-based training in combatting human trafficking along migration routes, run by the office of the Office Special Representative.

We are also pleased that, as part of the follow up to the visit of the Special Representative to Cyprus in September 2018, the competent authorities of the Republic of Cyprus are taking part in the OSCE Pilot Project on Financial Investigation in Trafficking in Human Beings, the first online meeting of which took place a few weeks ago.

In closing, I would like to reiterate our support to the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combatting THB and his able team. My delegation looks forward to continuing our fruitful co-operation.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.