



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Session 10**

### **Humanitarian issues and other commitments I: Combating trafficking in human beings Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings**

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Robert Bradtke  
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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Warsaw, September 30, 2013

The United States strongly supports our OSCE commitment to combat trafficking in persons through prosecution, protection, and prevention, as embodied in the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. Special Representative and Co-Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, has made valuable contributions to the implementation of these goals during her tenure. We look forward to working constructively on an annex to the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings as a Ministerial Decision in Kyiv.

Success in the fight against human trafficking comes down to participating States taking responsibility for achieving the fundamental goals set out by our shared OSCE commitments. Most countries in the OSCE actively prosecute traffickers, fund strong national referral mechanisms for victim care, warn groups vulnerable to human trafficking, and seek to reduce the demand for commercial sex. Those participating States that do not take action, suffer as a consequence.

In 2012, participating States Lithuania and Hungary amended their trafficking laws to more fully define the scope of the crime and to authorize enhanced victim services. Specifically, Lithuania approved amendments to its criminal code to comply with provisions of the EU anti-trafficking directive. It did this most notably by incorporating forced criminal behavior and forced begging into its anti-trafficking statute. Hungary amended its laws to require the government to provide shelter to identified trafficking victims regardless of whether they assist law enforcement. The new legislation also protects every victim irrespective of the victim's gender, race, or any particular status. We commend these initiatives.

On the other hand, several OSCE countries regressed in their anti-trafficking efforts in 2012. Despite taking measures to address government-sponsored forced labor of children aged 15 and under in the cotton fields, the Government of Uzbekistan continued to subject older children and adults to forced labor during the annual cotton harvest. There were also credible reports that the Government of Uzbekistan forced teachers, students, employees in private businesses, and others to work in construction, agriculture, and in cleaning parks. Labor trafficking remains the predominant human trafficking problem within Russia; the Migration Research Center estimates that one million people in Russia are exposed to "exploitative" labor conditions characteristic of trafficking cases, such as withholding of documents, nonpayment for services, physical abuse, or extremely poor living conditions. A

majority of foreign labor trafficking victims in Russia remained outside of the scope of victim protection.

The United States commends Ukraine for selecting combating human trafficking as a priority in its 2013 OSCE Chairmanship in Office. We thank Ukraine for hosting a High-Level Conference on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in June. That conference was followed by a useful training for employees of the commercial transportation and hospitality industries in Ukraine to identify potential victims of human trafficking.

The United States recognizes efforts throughout Europe—whether through the Council of Europe’s Convention on Action against Trafficking or the EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims—to establish Europe’s own high standards for the fight against human trafficking. We are grateful for OSCE and European collaboration in combating trafficking and in striving for no country to be complacent in the fight against trafficking in persons. We also acknowledge and appreciate the work of our Asian and Mediterranean Partners, in working more closely with OSCE participating States to combat the scourge of modern slavery. We must continue to build on this cooperation.

Thank you