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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS (CDPC)

**2017 HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE
ON SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS**

DRAFT AGENDA

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The High Level Conference on smuggling of migrants will focus on the importance of a harmonised approach to prevent and suppress this worrisome phenomenon effectively. The full-day Conference will take place in 2017, the date and place have to be determined. The Council of Europe aims to achieve ambitious targets, including:

- Exploring effective means to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants,
- Developing a more consistent, uniform criminalisation, punishment and prosecution of smugglers,
- Building up an adequate channel for cooperation and information exchange,
- Protecting the rights of smuggled migrants.

DRAFT AGENDA

Session I Preventing the smuggling of migrants

It is crucial to develop measures to prevent the smuggling of migrants. Criminalisation, law enforcement, and border controls alone do not suffice. Further effort are necessary to deter would-be offenders from engaging in the smuggling of migrants in the first place and prevent would-be migrants from falling victim to the promises made by smugglers. Inter alia, information and awareness programs must be put in place to inform migrants about the criminal nature and dangers associated with migrant smuggling.

Session II Aspects of criminalisation of the smuggling of migrants

The smuggling of migrants poses a significant challenge to contemporary criminal justice, international relations, national security, national immigration systems, and to the international community. Migrant smugglers exploit differences in national laws and legal systems to their advantage. Criminalisation is an essential first step to combat this phenomenon. All efforts need to go hand in hand with thorough enforcement, intelligence-gathering and investigations, and fair and efficient prosecutions and other criminal justice proceedings.

Session III Promotion and facilitation of international cooperation

While law enforcement is generally confined to one country, the smuggling of migrants is not. Criminal offenders operate across borders and often seek to evade detection, arrest, and punishment by relocating to other jurisdictions. The limited capacity of any one country to address some of these threats effectively translates into an overall weakness in the international regime of criminal justice cooperation. This is why comprehensive, multi-agency, and flexible cross-border cooperation is essential to ensure the appropriate investigation and prosecution of migrant smuggling.

Session IV Protect the rights of smuggled migrants

The smuggling of migrants involves the movement of human beings whose life, freedom, and safety are frequently at risk. Smuggled migrants are vulnerable to exploitation, deception, threats, and violence. International and domestic frameworks shall protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of smuggled migrants. Regardless of their immigration status, smuggled migrants have the right to expect that their human rights and dignity will be upheld at all stages by those who intercept and identify them and those who detain them.