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**COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES
COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON ACTION AGAINST
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

16th meeting of the Committee of the Parties

(Strasbourg, 15 June 2015)

MEETING REPORT

Table of contents

Agenda items 1 and 2: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda	3
Agenda item 3: Exchange of views with the President of GRETA.....	3
Agenda item 4: Examination of GRETA’s reports on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Finland, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania.....	4
Agenda item 5: Government replies to Committee of Parties recommendations.....	5
Agenda item 6: Follow up to be given to government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations	7
Agenda item 7: Co-operation activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA’s conclusions and the Committee of the Parties’ recommendations	7
Agenda item 8: Information on the activities of other international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties	8
Agenda item 9: State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	9
Agenda item 10: Dates of future meeting.....	9
Agenda item 11: Other business	9
Agenda item 12: Adoption of the list of decisions taken	9
Appendix I	10
Appendix II	11
Appendix III	18
Appendix VI.....	20
Appendix V	22
Appendix VI	25
Appendix VII	26
Appendix VIII	27
Appendix IX.....	28
Appendix X.....	30

Agenda items 1 and 2: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter referred to respectively as “the Committee” and “the Convention”) held its 16th meeting on 15 June 2015 in Strasbourg.
2. The meeting was opened by Ambassador Pekka HYVÖNEN (Finland), Chair of the Committee, who indicated that the meeting was being held in an enlarged composition, as provided by Rule 2c of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure, which envisages the presence of relevant international organisations and international NGOs as observers.
3. The Chair invited the members of the Committee to adopt the draft agenda of the meeting. The agenda, as adopted by the Committee, is set out in Appendix I. The list of participants is set out in Appendix II.

Agenda item 3: Exchange of views with the President of GRETA

4. Mr Nicolas LE COZ, President of GRETA, informed the Committee that since the last meeting of the Committee, GRETA had published four reports, concerning Finland, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania, thus bringing the total number of published GRETA evaluation reports to 39. The remaining four Parties to the Convention were either in the process of being evaluated (Switzerland), or would be evaluated in the course of 2015-2016 (Belarus, Estonia and Greece). As part of the second evaluation round, GRETA had already carried out eight evaluation visits and was expected to adopt final reports in respect of Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic at its next plenary meeting on 29 June - 3 July 2015.
5. The President of GRETA referred to some of the findings from the GRETA reports on Finland, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania, which were the subject of draft recommendations at this meeting. When it comes to the criminalisation of human trafficking, GRETA has detected certain gaps in the relevant legal provisions in Germany and Hungary. Further, GRETA had noted that three of the countries - Germany, Finland and Lithuania – did not have comprehensive or updated action plans or strategies to combat human trafficking. In all four countries, GRETA had stressed the need to improve the identification of victims of trafficking. Mr Le COZ also highlighted the implementation of the so-called “non-punishment provision” (Article 26 of the Convention) and informed the Committee that in GRETA’s view, the absence of a specific provision on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking entails a risk of treating them differently depending on the prosecutor in charge of the case. The full text of Mr LE COZ’s statement is set out in Appendix III.
6. The Chair thanked Mr LE COZ for his presentation and opened the floor for questions or comments concerning GRETA’s work. Mr Guido VIGEVENO (Netherlands) conveyed his country’s congratulations to GRETA for the work accomplished so far in terms of quality and quantity, and highlighted the value of the 4th General Report on GRETA’s activities, which identified areas where the standards set out by the Convention were not yet met. Mr VIGEVENO indicated that the forthcoming Dutch chairmanship of the EU in 2016 would focus on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation.
7. Ms Susanna ADAMYAN (Armenia) informed the Committee about the adoption on 17 December 2014 of a new Law on the Identification and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, which entered into force on 1 July 2015. Ms ADAMYAN reiterated the commitment of Armenian authorities to continue combating human trafficking and their close co-operation with the monitoring mechanism of the Convention in the course of the second evaluation round.

Agenda item 4: Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Finland, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania***4.1 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Finland***

8. The Chair asked the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Drahoslav STEFANEK (Slovak Republic), to chair the discussion of this draft recommendation. Ambassador Drahoslav STEFANEK invited the representative of Finland to take the floor concerning GRETA's final report on the implementation of the Convention by Finland. Ms Satu SISTONEN (Finland) noted the appreciation of the Finnish authorities of the work carried out by GRETA and the spirit of openness and co-operation during the evaluation procedure. As regards the draft recommendation, Ms SISTONEN proposed adding after "updated national action plan" the expression "and/or strategy", in the first bullet point on page 3, as this would be in line with the wording in GRETA's report and would also reflect the discussions between GRETA and the Finnish authorities. Further, Ms SISTONEN referred to the position of the Finnish authorities concerning the conclusions of GRETA regarding the issue of the victim's consent, the non-punishment provision, and the distinction between trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and extortionate work discrimination. The full text of Ms SISTONEN's statement is set out in Appendix IV.

9. The Executive Secretary noted that it had been the practice of the Committee of the Parties to take GRETA's reports as a whole and to recommend to States Parties to act on the totality of GRETA's proposals. She recalled that GRETA's reports represent the assessment of this independent expert body and are not subject to approval or amendment by the Committee of the Parties. The role of the Committee of the Parties is not to arbitrate between GRETA and the State Party, but to provide political impetus to the implementation of the Convention. The Executive Secretary also stressed that the monitoring process is a dialogue and there will be an opportunity to discuss GRETA's report and the Finnish authorities' position at a round-table meeting which will be organised in the course of 2016.

10. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Finland, with the amended proposed, and decided to request the Government of Finland to inform it of the measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 15 June 2017.

4.2 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Germany

11. The Chair invited the representative of Germany to take the floor concerning GRETA's final report on the implementation of the Convention by Germany. Ms Nicole ZÜNDORF-HINTE (Germany) congratulated GRETA on the work accomplished during the evaluation of Germany. She informed the Committee that in their report to the Committee of the Parties' recommendation, the German authorities would aim at concentrating on measures taken to address issues identified by GRETA as "urges" and would subsequently tackle other recommendations made by GRETA.

12. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Germany and decided to request the Government of Germany to inform it of the measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 15 June 2017.

4.3 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Hungary

13. The Chair invited the representative of Hungary to take the floor concerning GRETA's final report on the implementation of the Convention by Hungary. Ms Eszter GÁL (Hungary) noted that the Hungarian authorities were fully satisfied with the monitoring process and welcomed GRETA's first evaluation report, which provided detailed overview of the anti-trafficking action in Hungary. The Hungarian authorities considered that the draft recommendation corresponded to the current needs, provided appropriate guidelines for future work and was in harmony with national strategies on social inclusion and on action against human trafficking.

14. Mr Guido VIGEVENO (Netherlands) highlighted the good co-operation in the criminal field between Hungary and the Netherlands as regards action against human trafficking, and expressed hope that Hungary will be able to implement all of GRETA's recommendations.

15. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Hungary and decided to request the Government of Hungary to inform it of the measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 15 June 2017.

4.4 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Lithuania

16. The Chair invited the representative of Lithuania to take the floor concerning GRETA's final report on the implementation of the Convention by Lithuania. Ms Reda SIRGEDIENE (Lithuania) stated that GRETA's report was fair and comprehensive, containing useful guidelines for the Lithuanian authorities as regards the improvements that needed to be made. Ms SIRGEDIENE informed the Committee about the on-going government audit of the implementation of the national crime prevention action plan, including the chapter regarding action against human trafficking. The Lithuanian authorities had also finalised drafting of guidelines for identification of victims of trafficking.

17. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Lithuania and decided to request the Government of Lithuania to inform it of the measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 15 June 2017.

Agenda item 5: Government replies to Committee of Parties recommendations

18. The Chair recalled that at its 10th meeting on 15 February 2013 and at its 11th Meeting on 6 June 2013, the Committee had adopted recommendations concerning the implementation of the Convention by Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Poland and Portugal, requesting them to inform the Committee of measures taken to comply with the these recommendations within a two-year period. He indicated that the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom had submitted their replies to the Committee of the Parties recommendations, which had been made available on the Committee's restricted website. The Chair also recalled that following the extension of the deadline given to the authorities of the United Kingdom for submitting their reply to the Committee until 13 March 2015, comments from the UK authorities were received on 12 March 2015.

5.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

19. The Chair noted that a representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina was not present in the meeting room and invited the Committee to take note of the report provided by this party's authorities.

5.2. France

20. The Chair invited the representative of France to take the floor concerning the measures taken by the French authorities to comply with the Committee's recommendation on the implementation of the Convention. Ms Élisabeth MOIRON-BRAUD (France) stated that GRETA's report helped to improve action against human trafficking in France and was followed up by concrete measures, such as the setting up of the multidisciplinary co-ordinating body and the adoption of the first action plan on combating THB. Further, she informed the Committee of legislative amendments adopted on 5 August 2013 by the National Assembly, which enlarged the definition of the human trafficking offence and made it possible for victims of trafficking in the situation of irregular stay to claim compensation, even when the offender had not been found or was insolvent. According to Ms MOIRON-BRAUD, the objective set by the authorities for 2015-2016 consists of improving co-ordination of anti-trafficking work at all levels. The full text of Ms MOIRON-BRAUD's statement is set out in Appendix V.

5.3. Latvia

21. The Chair invited the representative of Latvia to take the floor concerning the measures taken by the Latvian authorities to comply with the Committee's recommendation on the implementation of the Convention. Ms Lāsma STABIŅA (Latvia) informed the Committee that the report of GRETA served as a background to elaborate the National Strategy for Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings 2014 – 2020. She informed the Committee that trends of trafficking in human beings in Latvia were changing and that trafficking was becoming more complicated to detect and investigate. As an example, Ms STABIŅA mentioned the phenomenon of "sham marriages", which in many cases lead to the exploitation of Latvian women concluding marriages with third-country nationals in foreign countries. She informed the Committee of an international project HESTIA "Preventing human trafficking and sham marriages: A multidisciplinary solution", which was being implemented as of January 2015 by six countries: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Ireland, Finland and Slovak Republic with the objective to create a shared understanding of "sham marriages" as a form of trafficking in human beings and initiate comprehensive action for the prevention of this phenomenon. The full text of Ms STABIŅA's intervention is set out in Appendix VI.

5.4. Malta

22. The Chair invited the representative of Malta to take the floor concerning the measures taken by the Maltese authorities to comply with the Committee's recommendation on the implementation of the Convention. Ms Josephine DAMATO (Malta) thanked GRETA and the Committee of the Parties for their guidance during the first monitoring round of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention by Malta and noted that the Maltese authorities were looking forward to continuing the good co-operation during the second evaluation round.

5.5. Norway

23. The Chair of the Committee stated that the representative of Norway did not deem necessary to take the floor, bearing in mind that the authorities' report to the Committee was succinct and to the point. The Chair expressed the view that Norway was setting a good-practice example by producing a focussed and reader-friendly report, containing information directly relevant to Committee of the Parties' and GRETA's recommendations.

5.6. Poland

24. The Chair invited the representative of Poland to take the floor concerning the measures taken by the Polish authorities to comply with the Committee's recommendation on the implementation of the Convention. Ms Marta KACZMARSKA (Poland) informed the Committee of legislative amendments adopted since 2013, which concerned the granting of a recovery and reflection period and residence permits to foreign victims of trafficking, as well as strengthening further the protection of child victims of trafficking. Further, the Polish authorities had reinforced the human resources of the Unit on Combating THB at the Ministry of the Interior and the regional police units, and special multi-agency units were being set up in each of the 16 regions. The full text of Ms KACZMARSKA's intervention is set out in Appendix VII.

5.7. Portugal

25. The Chair invited the representative of Portugal to take the floor concerning the measures taken by the Portuguese authorities to comply with the Committee's recommendation on the implementation of the Convention. Mr Manuel ALBANO (Portugal) informed the Committee about the amendment of the definition of trafficking in human beings in the Portuguese Criminal Code, the creation of a Network of Support to Victims of Trafficking, and the setting up of a shelter for male victims of trafficking. Mr ALBANO highlighted the importance of GRETA's report, which inspired many legislative and practical measures taken by the Portuguese authorities in the area of anti-trafficking.

5.8. United Kingdom

26. The Chair invited the representative of the United Kingdom to take the floor concerning the measures taken by the British authorities to comply with the Committee's recommendation. Mr Mark GOREY (United Kingdom) thanked the Committee for having extended the deadline given to the British authorities to report on the measures taken to comply with the Committee's recommendation. Mr GOREY had no additional comments to make to the report of the UK Government.

27. The Committee thanked the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom for the detailed information provided on measures to implement the Committee's recommendations.

Agenda item 6: Follow up to be given to government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations

28. The Committee decided to forward the reports to GRETA for consideration in the framework of the next evaluation round. The Committee also decided to make the reports public on the Council of Europe's anti-trafficking website.

Agenda item 7: Co-operation activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations

29. The Executive Secretary of the Convention informed the Committee about the organisation of a second workshop for judges and prosecutors on the application of the non-punishment provision (Article 26 of the Convention) on 27-28 April 2015 in Strasbourg. Further, she indicated that an international conference on "The interface between protection of victims of trafficking in human beings and asylum", which was organised on 23-24 June in Sofia, Bulgaria, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Bulgarian National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings.

30. The Chair invited the Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), having participatory status at the Committee, to take the floor. Ms Gülsün BILGEHAN, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination recalled that the PACE was at the origins of the Convention and was actively promoting its speedy ratification and entry into force. She noted that Turkey had signed the Convention in 2009 and assured the Committee that ratification was on the agenda of the Turkish Parliament and should take place after the Parliamentary elections of 7 June 2015. The full text of Ms BILGEHAN's intervention is set out in Appendix VIII.

Agenda item 8: Information on the activities of other international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties

31. The Chair invited the representative of the European Commission, which has a participatory status with the Committee, to take the floor. Dr Myria VASSILIADOU, EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator, informed the Committee about the latest developments and priorities of the EU legal and policy framework as regards action against trafficking in human beings. She stressed the victim-centred, human-rights, child centred, and gender-specific approach that this legal and policy framework was based on. She also referred to the state of transposition of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, explaining that 25 out of 27 member States bound by the Directive had already informed the Commission of the full transposition of the Directive into national laws. Furthermore, Dr VASSILIADOU referred to the fact that the Commission was in the process of analysing information received from member States and highlighted that the Commission will report in 2016 on the state of transposition of the Directive. She further referred to the Midterm Report of 18 October 2014 on the implementation of the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings, highlighting the need to reduce the demand and the importance of following the money generated by exploitation of human beings, which are two main causes of trafficking in human beings. Dr VASSILIADOU also mentioned that the work in progress of preparing the first EU Report on trafficking in human beings, based mainly on contributions from member States and National Referral Mechanisms and civil society. In addition, she presented the latest data on human trafficking published in the Eurostat working paper covering the years 2010-2012.

32. The Chair gave the floor to the representative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), attending the meeting as an observer. Ambassador Madina JARBUSSYNOVA, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings, informed the Committee of the three current priority areas for the anti-trafficking activities of the OSCE: improving victim identification and assistance, including through advocating for the implementation of the non-punishment principle; strengthening the criminal justice response, including through developing a training module on the use of financial investigations in the prosecution of human trafficking cases; and enhancing the prevention of human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, by working with States to develop measures, such as contract policies, to prevent trafficking in supply chains. She referred to the close co-operation between her Office and the Council of Europe and the efforts made to avoid duplication and build synergies. Ms JARBUSSYNOVA also noted that she would be conducting a survey of OSCE participating States. The full text of Ms JARBUSSYNOVA's intervention is set out in Appendix IX.

33. The Chair invited the representative of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), attending the meeting as observer, to take the floor. Ms Elisa TROSSERO referred to a joint project proposal developed together with the Council of Europe on improving transnational co-operation in the referral to assistance of victims of trafficking. The proposal will build upon the Transnational Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking developed by the ICMPD and GRETA's recommendations. It is also in line with the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, which includes as an action the establishment of National and Transnational Referral Mechanisms. The full text of Ms TROSSERO's intervention is set out in Appendix X

Agenda item 9: State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

34. The Chair informed the Committee that on 5 February 2015 Estonia had submitted its ratification instrument, bringing the number of Parties to the Convention to 43. The Chair further informed the Committee that since the previous meeting in December 2014, he had held meetings with the Permanent Representatives of the Czech Republic and Turkey to enquire about progress made in joining the Convention. According to the Ambassador of Turkey, the ratification of the Convention was on the agenda of the Turkish Parliament as a matter of priority. The Czech Ambassador had indicated that there were no legal issues impeding the signature and ratification of the Convention, but the Ministry of Justice had decided to give priority to signing other Council of Europe conventions.

35. The Committee stressed once again the importance of all Council of Europe member States joining the Convention and agreed to encourage those member States which have not yet done so to speed up the process of signature and/or ratification.

Agenda item 10: Dates of future meeting

36. Bearing in mind that GRETA intended to adopt final reports in respect of Austria, Cyprus, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland at its next meeting on 29 June - 3 July 2015, and that the Committee is due to receive interim reports concerning measures taken to implement the Committee's recommendations by the authorities of Belgium, Ireland and Spain by 7 October 2015, The Committee agreed to hold its 17th meeting on Monday, 30 November 2015, starting at 14:30.

Agenda item 11: Other business

37. Ambassador Pekka HYVÖNEN informed the Committee that due to the imminent termination of his mission as Permanent Representative of Finland to the Council of Europe, this was the last meeting of the Committee which he chaired. He thanked members and participants to the Committee for their constructive co-operation during his two mandates as Chair. On behalf of the Committee, Ambassador STEFANEK (Vice-Chair) expressed gratitude to the outgoing Chair for his remarkable efforts and dedication in guiding the Committee's work and promoting new ratifications of the Convention and wished him much success in his new duties.

Agenda item 12: Adoption of the list of decisions taken

38. The Committee approved the decisions taken at the meeting.

Appendix I

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Adoption of the draft agenda**
- 3. Exchange of views with the President of GRETA**
- 4. Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Finland, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties**
- 5. Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations**
- 6. Follow up to be given to government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations**
- 7. Co-operation activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations**
- 8. Information on the anti-trafficking activities of other international organisations and non-governmental organisations**
- 9. State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**
- 10. Dates of future meetings**
- 11. Other business**
- 12. Adoption of the list of decisions taken**

Appendix II

List of participants / Liste de participants

Members of the Committee of the Parties / Membres du Comité des Parties

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

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Représentant Permanent Adjoint
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Adjointe au représentant permanent
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**"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF
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 Deputy to the Permanent Representative
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UKRAINE

Mr Oleksandr KULIKOVSKYI
 Deputy to the Permanent Representative
 to the Council of Europe

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE BODIES /
 ORGANES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS /
 COMITÉ DES MINISTRES**

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DU
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Appendix III

Statement made by Mr Nicolas Le Coz, President of GRETA

Mr Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the Committee of the Parties' last meeting, GRETA has made public **four more final country evaluation reports**, concerning Finland, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania, which you will be considering later today with a view to adopting recommendations addressed to the respective national authorities. This brings that number of countries already evaluated by GRETA under the first evaluation round of the Convention to **39**. The evaluation of Switzerland will be completed in two weeks' time, when GRETA will adopt the final report concerning this country. As for the remaining three countries (Greece, Belarus and Estonia), they will be evaluated for the first time in 2016.

In the meantime, the **second round of evaluation of the Convention**, launched in May 2014, is progressing. Visits have taken place to **eight countries**, and at its next plenary meeting in two weeks' time GRETA will adopt final reports in respect of Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic, which will be published subsequently, after the national authorities have had the opportunity to send their comments.

I would like to focus on the four GRETA reports which are on your agenda today.

All four countries are EU member States and have to comply both with the CoE Convention and the EU Directive. When it comes to the **criminalisation of human trafficking**, GRETA has detected certain gaps in the relevant legal provisions in Germany and Hungary.

GRETA noted that three of the countries - Germany, Finland and Lithuania – did not have comprehensive or updated **action plans or strategies** to combat human trafficking.

In all four countries, GRETA stressed the need to improve the **identification of victims of trafficking**. In Finland, GRETA urged the authorities to increase efforts to proactively identify victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and cases of new forms of trafficking, such as forced begging. In Germany, GRETA recommended multi-agency involvement in the identification of trafficking victims. In Hungary, GRETA welcomes the setting up of a national referral mechanism to improve the identification of victims of human trafficking, but asked the authorities to improve the identification of victims amongst irregular migrants, asylum seekers and unaccompanied foreign minors. In Lithuania, GRETA asked the authorities to improve the identification of victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, victims among foreign nationals, and child victims.

In respect of **prosecution** of human trafficking offences, in Hungary, GRETA welcomed the involvement of the Hungarian authorities in international investigations into trafficking cases, but noted that the number of convictions was low and the sanctions were not commensurate with the gravity of the offence. In its reports on Finland and Lithuania, GRETA urged the authorities to ensure that human trafficking offences are proactively investigated and prosecuted promptly, leading to proportionate and dissuasive sanctions. In the report on Germany, GRETA considered that training on THB for judges and prosecutors should be enhanced to achieve more effective investigation and prosecution of trafficking offences. GRETA also asked the German and the Lithuanian authorities take steps to guarantee the effective application of the legal provisions concerning the confiscation of traffickers' assets.

As regards **compensation**, GRETA asked all four countries to take measures to facilitate and guarantee access to compensation to victims of trafficking.

I would like to highlight the implementation of the so-called “**non-punishment provision**” (Article 26 of the Convention). Article 26 of the Convention, read in conjunction with the Explanatory Report, establishes a legal obligation for States Parties to adopt legislation that provides for the possibility of not imposing penalties on victims of human trafficking for offences they have committed as a result of being trafficked. The scope of the non-punishment obligation continued to raise questions, and it is not accidental that the CoE Secretariat, together with the OSCE, organised recently two workshops for judges and prosecutors on this subject.

GRETA considers that the absence of a specific provision on the non-punishment of victims of trafficking entails a risk of treating them differently depending on the prosecutor in charge of the case. Consequently, GRETA has recommended the adoption of specific legislation on non-punishment of victims of trafficking in many countries. It has also recommended that further training be provided to judges, prosecutors, police officers and lawyers regarding trafficking and the rights of victims of trafficking, and that particular attention be drawn to the non-punishment principle in the training provided to relevant professionals.

As you know, two months ago GRETA published its **4th General Report**, which I presented to the Committee of Ministers on 1 April 2015. The report took stock on trends, gaps and good practices emerging from the first 35 country reports published by GRETA. In the first place, it stressed the need for stepping up efforts to identify child victims of human trafficking, including among unaccompanied minors, and provide them with the support they are legally entitled to. During the second evaluation round GRETA is paying particular attention to measures taken to address the vulnerability of children to trafficking.

Further measures are also needed in many countries to improve the identification of victims of trafficking, to provide victims with better assistance and protection, and to guarantee compensation. Improving the effectiveness of investigations, prosecutions and convictions related to human trafficking is another area where there is still much work to be done.

You are all aware that a **conference on the occasion of the 10th anniversary** of the opening for signature of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is taking place tomorrow. This will be an occasion to review our achievements but also focus on what needs to be improved. GRETA looks forward to this event and on its behalf I would like to thank the Committee for the regular exchange between the two pillars of the monitoring mechanism of the Convention.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix VI

Statement made by Ms Satu Sistonen, Legal Officer, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Mr Chairman,

On behalf of the Government of Finland, I would first like to express our appreciation to GRETA as well as the Secretariat for their work in conducting this first evaluation round on the implementation of the Convention by Finland. Particularly, we would like to thank GRETA's delegation visiting Finland a year ago for the useful visit and also for their cooperation and flexibility in preparing and during the visit.

We have noted, throughout the evaluation, the efficiency and expertise with what GRETA has accomplished its tasks and the willingness of GRETA to understand the measures taken in Finland to implement the Convention. We appreciate the dialogue that we have been able to engage in with GRETA and the spirit of openness and cooperation that has existed during the evaluation.

As to the topic of the day, the final report by GRETA and the proposals therein. My Government acknowledges the report and the proposals. We will carefully examine them. We also acknowledge the draft recommendation by the Committee of States Parties.

In particular, my Government is pleased to see that our efforts made and steps taken in the action against trafficking in human beings, such as the development of our legislation and the setting up of the national assistance system as well as the appointment of the National Rapporteur and more recently the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator have been acknowledged.

In this connection, we welcome that the report stresses the importance of structural developments. In our view structural developments are an important step in strengthening the Government's commitment to combat trafficking in human beings. As we pointed out in our final comments to the report, the preparations of the new Anti-trafficking Coordination Structure are proceeding. It is expected that the Structure will, for example, include networking activities linking many important organizations including the central NGOs to the Structure.

At the same time, my Government would like to stress that in the strategic work, different needs for strategic planning of anti-trafficking activities and the possible ways to contribute to these needs both in national and European level, including in the EU, will be assessed.

Our first suggestion, which we see rather technical relates to the aforesaid.

As to the identification and assistance of victims, in particular concerning children, we refer to the recently adopted amendments to the legislation concerning assistance and identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, which have also been acknowledged and described in the report. The amendments will enter into force in just a few weeks' time. These amendments will improve the identification and assistance of victims. For example, it will now be explicitly expected that the specific needs of a victim, based on the victim's vulnerable position, such as age, are taken into account and will be examined in reasonable time and taken into account throughout assistance.

Moreover, we would like to recall that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health plans to prepare, jointly with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, guidance on THB issues for social and health professionals in municipalities. The purpose of this guidance is to address the deficiencies identified in providing assistance to victims with a temporary municipality of residence.

Finally, in terms of substantive criminal law, my Government would like to recall its comments to the report and reiterate that in Finland the questions of consent of a victim and non-punishment of victims

are determined by principles of law. No special provisions in respect of THB have been considered warranted and no corresponding provisions exist on other serious criminal offences, either. Specific provisions on trafficking in human beings would strongly depart from the common line.

Moreover, my Government would like to recall that the distinction between THB for the purpose of labour exploitation and extortionate work discrimination was examined in depth already just recently in connection with other amendments made to the criminal legislation concerning THB. Amendments in this respect were not deemed necessary as the relevant provisions can be distinguished clearly from each other. Similarly, the question of criminalising the use of services which are the object of labour exploitation has been examined but deemed not appropriate.

That said, my Government does not insist on amending the draft recommendation of the Committee of States Parties as put forward in its second suggestion.

Let me finish by thanking GRETA and the Secretariat once again and stating that we look forward to continuing the constructive dialogue with GRETA as well as informing on the measures taken in reply to its proposals in two years' time.

Thank you.

Appendix V

**Statement made by Ms Elisabeth Moiron-Braud,
Secretary General of MIPROF (Interministerial Task Force on the protection of women victims of
violence and the fight against human trafficking),
Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Rights of Women**

I thank the Chairs and members of the Committee of the Parties and the President of GRETA for inviting me to outline the French Government's interim report which was submitted on 15 February 2015 and focuses on implementation of the recommendations you made at the meeting on 15 February 2013.

Following on from your recommendations, France has endeavoured to develop a fully-fledged public policy on action against trafficking in human beings (THB). This government drive has resulted in the setting up of a body for co-ordinating action against THB, the MIPROF, and the announcement by the President of the Republic of the first national action plan against THB. The arrangements put in place reflect GRETA'S recommendations, and your expectations have very much been borne in mind. The firm course of action taken by our Government has resulted first of all in the strengthening of our legal arsenal in the sphere of trafficking in human beings.

The law of 5 August 2013 introducing various adaptations in the area of justice pursuant to European Union law and France's international commitments changed the definition of the offence of THB. It extended the forms of exploitation mentioned in Article 225-4-1 of the Criminal Code to cover slavery, subjecting a person to forced labour or services, servitude and also organ removal. In addition, new constituent means of the offence were introduced: coercion, abuse of vulnerability and abuse of authority, which were merely aggravating circumstances in the previous text.

Our law is now in line with the definition of the Council of Europe Convention of 16 May 2005 and Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and the Council (proposal 2).

That same law amended Article 2-22 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which expressly states that the offence of THB entitles authorised associations to exercise the rights granted to the plaintiff in civil proceedings (proposal 33).

The amendment of Article 706-3 of the Code of Criminal Procedure has made it possible to include victims illegally present on French territory among those entitled to apply to the commission for the compensation of victims of criminal offences and receive compensation even if the perpetrator has not been identified or is insolvent (proposal 24).

The law of 4 August 2014 stipulates that the residence permit is automatically renewable for victims of THB for the entire duration of criminal proceedings and, in the event of a definitive conviction of the perpetrators, a full residence permit is to be issued to them automatically (proposal 22 and 23)

The bill reinforcing action against the system of prostitution, passed on its second reading on 12 June, will serve as another key vector, with a number of articles providing for greater rights to be granted to victims of THB in the area of the right of residence, social rights and increased protection.

At the same time, the MIPROF is steering initiatives to implement the action plan which is configured around three priorities:

1. identifying and assisting victims of THB
2. prosecuting and dismantling trafficking networks
3. making action against THB a fully-fledged public policy

With regard to **Priority 1 - identifying and assisting victims of THB** - identifying victims of THB inevitably involves the training of professionals, which is defined as a priority for GRETA and for the action plan. Trafficking in human beings already forms part of the training programme for specialised professionals (labour inspectors, judges and prosecutors, staff of the French Office for the protection of refugees and stateless persons (OFPRA), etc.).

The second measure in our action plan provides for reinforced training, through the creation of educational tools, for all professionals who might identify or spot these victims (healthcare professionals, social workers, professionals involved in protecting young people, etc.).

Our governmental bodies and the associations are working to draw up a guide on the detection and referral of THB victims. The guide will be accompanied by a booklet on the specific form of exploitation involved - exploitation through labour, sexual exploitation, exploitation of minors (proposals 2 and 19).

Furthermore, in line with GRETA'S proposals, it is planned to take concrete steps to give effect to and reinforce victims' rights, particularly with regard to the right of residence, assistance, accommodation and protection.

Regarding the right of residence, and in addition to the positive legislative steps I mentioned previously, the Ministry of the Interior distributed a circular on 19 May 2015 to reiterate and specify the conditions for examining applications by victims of THB and pimping for residence permits. The circular states that the intended goal is to improve application of existing provisions to effectively and consistently guarantee the right of residence for victims of THB or pimping. Emphasis is placed on the reflection period and the issue of the temporary residence permit, as well as the need to appoint a specially trained reference person in préfectures. It is expressly stipulated that victims may elect domicile at the address of a lawyer or an association and that the setting up of departmental co-ordination units to provide better assistance for victims and pave the way for prosecution of perpetrators is to be encouraged.

All this progress in relation to the right of residence will be enshrined in Article 6 of the law reinforcing action against the system of prostitution, which provides for the issue of a residence permit lasting one year by law to victims who co-operate with the authorities. Victims of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation who do not co-operate will be eligible to receive a residence permit of at least six months renewable if they commit to a scheme aimed at removing them from this environment and integrating them into society. (Recommendations 22 and 23)

Assistance and support for victims of trafficking in human beings are covered in measures 7, 8 and 9 of the national action plan, with the aim of enabling them to escape from a situation in which they are being exploited and take their rightful place in society.

These tasks are chiefly handled by associations. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights funds the policy of prevention and action against prostitution and THB for the purposes of pimping. This funding, which amounted to €2.4 million in 2014, pays for the health care and social assistance provided to individuals who are made to work as prostitutes or otherwise exploited and help support the activities of the associations.

It should be noted that this assistance is not dependent on the nationality of the victims, their willingness to co-operate or their administrative situation regarding the right of residence.

A few initiatives implemented in 2015:

The secure reception facilities run by the Ac-Sé network which make it possible to provide shelter and assistance for victims have demonstrated their effectiveness: measure 8 provides for their expansion.

We are currently preparing a similar pilot scheme aimed at victims of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation wishing to put an end to their involvement in prostitution in collaboration with the Paris prosecutor's office. They will be assisted right up to the criminal trial stage, as we know how much witness testimony facilitates public proceedings and makes it possible to deal appropriately with the perpetrators of the offence. The protection of child victims is a priority action laid down in measures 10 and 11 of the Plan which provide for assistance tailored to the specific situation by educators with THB training. We are now setting up a pilot scheme in Paris where children who have been exploited and forced to commit petty offences will be taken into care and referred to distant placement facilities to give them effective protection against the networks.

Finally, there is the prevention aspect. To prevent the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, we must raise awareness among specific target audiences and take action to discourage demand, which is the aim of measure 4 of the action plan and proposals 10, 11 and 12 in the GRETA report.

We know that the networks prey on the great vulnerability of their victims, many of them women and children facing poverty and violence. However, the causes of exploitation also include the massive profits it generates and increased demand, particularly for sexual services or, by companies, for forced labour or service providers which use exploited people.

To prevent exploitation through labour, the MIPROF is working with the Directorate General of Labour, the NGO Committee against Modern Slavery (CCEM) and the Central Office for Combating Illegal Labour (OCLTI) to prepare a cross-industry framework contract that will be binding on employers and trade union organisations. Its purpose will be to raise awareness in the corporate world and make companies take their responsibilities in view of the consequences of using forced labour and employing victims of THB. This is measure 4 of the action plan.

Both the European Union and the Council of Europe are encouraging States to take all necessary steps to discourage demand, including the criminalisation of the use of services resulting from exploitation.

Article 8 of the bill reinforcing action against the system of prostitution, which provides for criminal punishment for using the services of a prostitute, should make it possible to discourage demand. This provision is fully in line with Resolution 1983 of 8 April 2014 on "Prostitution, trafficking and modern slavery in Europe", which urges the States to "consider criminalising the purchase of sexual services, based on the Swedish model, as the most effective tool for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings".

In connection with our priority 2, "prosecuting and dismantling trafficking networks", several of GRETA's proposals relating to substantive criminal law, investigations and prosecutions have been taken into account.

The public authorities have been mobilised in a drive to clamp down more heavily on these offences by seizing and confiscating perpetrators' assets. According to our data, the number of investigations of assets resulting in proceeds of crime being seized sharply increased in 2013. The criminal law circular issued by the Minister of Justice on 22 January 2015 meeting the aims of measure 12 of the plan will certainly result in increased efforts as regards both prosecutions and confiscations.

Article L.8112-2 of the Labour Code will be amended, as provided for in measure 13 of the plan, to extend labour inspectors' powers to ascertain THB offences and issue fines for them.

Priority 3 - making action against THB a fully-fledged public policy

This forms part of a "global approach to action against THB and co-ordination of all those involved" both institutionally and within civil society promoted by the Council of Europe. The MIPROF is tasked with co-ordinating the public policy introduced and ensuring that the three-year action plan is carried out. Some measures have already been completed and we must now implement the remainder.

If this public policy is to be fully effective, it requires regular monitoring and assessment of the actions carried out, in keeping with the European Union directive of 5 April 2011, by a national rapporteur, preferably an independent administrative authority. For that reason measure 23 entrusts these tasks to the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH).

Appendix VI

**Statement made by Ms Lāsma Stabiņa,
Senior desk officer,
National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator of Latvia, Ministry of the Interior**

Mr Chair,

Latvia has provided a comprehensive report on measures taken to comply with the Committee of the Parties' Recommendation on implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Latvia. The Latvian authorities are grateful to GRETA for the report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Latvia (first evaluation round), which was used as a background document to elaborate the new National Strategy for Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings 2014 – 2020, approved by the Latvian Government in the beginning of 2014. Since the Committee of the Parties' Recommendation on implementation of the Convention by Latvia was adopted in 15 February 2013, the Latvian authorities have made significant improvements to address trafficking in human beings. The situation and trends of trafficking in human beings are changing and becoming more complex to identify and investigate and the Latvian Government acknowledges that there are a lot of to do to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings and assist, support and protect victims of trafficking in human beings. The Latvian Government and the competent authorities identify new challenges and are looking for innovative approaches and measures to deal with them. An example of such a new trend is the phenomenon of sham marriages in the context of trafficking in human beings. The transnational project HESTIA "Preventing human trafficking and sham marriages: A multidisciplinary solution" is being implemented since January 2015 by six countries: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Ireland, Finland and Slovak Republic. The objective of the project is to create a shared understanding of this new form of trafficking in human beings, provide a precise definition of sham marriages as a form of human trafficking hitherto non-existent at the EU level, and initiate a comprehensive action for its prevention.

Appendix VII

Statement made by Ms Marta Kaczmarek, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Poland to the Council of Europe

Mr Chair,
Dear colleagues,

Poland's information on the measures taken to implement recommendation CP(2013)7 of 7 June 2015 was distributed to you before the meeting, thus I will not go into a detailed response to each recommendation. Right now I wish to focus on two issues important for the fight against THB and showing Poland's commitment in this respect.

Firstly, I wish to highlight several legislative and institutional changes that contribute to a more efficient fight against THB:

- the amendments to the Act on Foreigners, which provide for important changes in terms of granting reflection period and residence permits for foreign victims of trafficking. During the reflection period of 3 months (4 months in case of an underage victim), the victim receives a certificate confirming the presumption that he/she is a victim of THB. This certificate entitles him/her to a legal stay and several other rights. The holder of such certificate is not required to co-operate with the investigation at this stage. The only condition for a victim is to terminate all contacts with the suspects. The amendments at hand significantly simplified the procedure of granting reflection period and broadened the catalogue of victims' rights. Consequently, more victims have benefited from the reflection period: while in 2013 there was no case of granting a reflection period, in 2014 there were 22 such cases registered, and in 2015 (up to 30 April) there are already 8 of them;
- the amendments to the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, in force since 2014, introduced several changes aimed at strengthening further the protection of victims of trafficking. They concern mostly the limitations to the questioning of child victims under the age of 15 years old (such as one-time questioning and necessity of the questioning requirement, assistance of a psychologist, special technical arrangements), which exceptionally can be applied also to the victims between 15 and 18 years old;
- changes to national THB structures – the Unit against Trafficking in Human Beings in the Ministry of the Interior was strengthened and currently comprises five staff. Similar units in the regional Police headquarters were strengthened as well (72 staff in 2014 comparing to 53 in 2013). In addition, in 2014 the Unit for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings was established within the National Police Headquarters.

Secondly, I would like to briefly present you the ongoing activities aimed at improving Poland's capacity to prevent trafficking in human beings. Currently we are working within the framework of the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2013-2015. It provides, among other things, for an increased co-operation at the regional (voivodeship) level. Each of 16 regions needs to set up a special unit against THB, composed of the representatives of various local institutions and NGOs, with no participation of the central administration. Currently, 11 such units exist and the remaining 5 will be launched by the end of 2015. A similar project is run at the NGOs level, with an aim to create a nationwide network of NGOs to support the prevention of and combating THB and to provide help and support to the victims.

Furthermore, there are projects focused on researching the problem of THB and its understanding and perception within the Polish society ('Improvement of Poland's capacity to fight against trafficking in human beings'), the results of which will serve as a basis for future campaigns, as well as projects aimed at more precise identification of child victims. With regard to the latter, an expert group is working on the 'Algorithm of Identification and Conduct for Police/Border Guard Officers in Case of Minor Victims of Human Trafficking' and it is expected that the document will be completed and ready for implementation at the end of 2015.

Appendix VIII

Statement made by Ms Gülsün Bilgehan, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving me the floor. I am Gülsün Bilgehan, Turkish parliamentarian and Chair of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

It is with great pleasure and interest that, for the first time today, I am attending a meeting of the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

It was the Parliamentary Assembly that set the ball rolling for the creation of this instrument, and promoting the Convention is part and parcel of the terms of reference of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination. I can assure you that we never miss an opportunity to show our support for your activities. That is also why I wished to join you today and participate in tomorrow's 10th anniversary of the opening of the Convention for signature.

My country, Turkey, is one of several countries yet to ratify the Convention before it can become applicable across all Council of Europe member States.

Turkey signed the Convention on 19 March 2009, which then went before the Turkish Parliament in line with the usual ratification procedure. Although it was on the Parliament's order of business, the ratification process could not be finalised owing to a particularly heavy workload. I can assure you, though, that we are fully aware of its importance and I am confident that the ratification process can be completed during the next parliamentary term.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Appendix IX

Statement made by Ambassador Madina Jarbussynova OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings

Dear Ambassador,
Dear GRETA President,
Dear Excellencies,
Dear colleagues and friends,

I am honoured to take the floor at this Committee of the Parties to share with you some information on the work of my office at the OSCE. To start with, the position of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings was established in 2003 as a high-level mechanism to promote the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan and other commitments on combating trafficking in human beings in all of our 57 participating States. I took Office as the fourth Special Representative on 1 September 2014, after serving as the PCU in Ukraine for over two years. The mandate of this mechanism is to raise the public and political profile of combating trafficking in human beings, to assist the OSCE participating States in the implementation of anti-trafficking commitments; to pursue strategic co-ordination of OSCE anti-trafficking efforts, to co-operate with international and regional partners; and to report on anti-trafficking developments in the OSCE region.

Combating THB is a **cross-dimensional issue** across all the three OSCE dimensions of security: political-military, economic and the human dimension, as trafficking violates the dignity and fundamental rights of people, undermines economic growth and good governance, thrives on corruption, fuels organized crime, posing a threat to the security of individuals and States. The OSCE has been a **pioneer of the human rights approach to preventing and countering trafficking**, working to ensure that the respect of human rights of trafficked persons, is at the heart of anti-trafficking action. This is reflected in the numerous OSCE commitments and in the OSCE concept of National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) aimed at ensuring the protection of rights of trafficked persons, their identification, support and empowerment through a comprehensive, multiagency and multidisciplinary approach, which is being implemented in many participating States. We would be glad to be invited to the next EU meeting on NRMs considering that the OSCE developed this concept, and our field offices work on supporting NRMs in many of our participating States.

The OSCE Action Plan is the key document providing the approach and framework for the anti-trafficking efforts of the OSCE participating States. Its full and effective implementation remains a strategic OSCE goal. Following the adoption of the Action Plan, subsequent OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions have advanced the OSCE response to trafficking in human beings by addressing specific aspects of the problem. Such aspects include child trafficking, trafficking for labour exploitation and enhancing criminal justice responses. In 2013 in Kyiv, the Ministerial Council adopted the *Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: One Decade later*.

My office is actively working to support the implementation of this Addendum. In particular, we are focused on three priority areas:

- 1) Improving victim identification and assistance, including through advocating for the implementation of the non-punishment principle, focusing on the identification of trafficking in human beings in crisis situations, and promoting NRMs;
- 2) Strengthening the criminal justice response, including through developing a training module on the use of financial investigations in the prosecution of human trafficking cases, which will be pilot tested together with key partners; and continuing to support judicial training activities;
- 3) Enhancing prevention of human trafficking including by following-up on the Occasional Paper "Ending Exploitation. Ensuring that Businesses do not Contribute to Trafficking in Human Beings: Duties of States and the Private Sector" by working with participating States to develop measures, such as contract policies, to prevent human trafficking in supply chains.

Each year I conduct high-level country visits in OSCE participating States to assess the implementation of our OSCE anti-trafficking commitments. We co-ordinate the planning of our country visits with the CoE/GRETA and consult the GRETA monitoring visits schedule to avoid duplication and to build synergies, as I am glad to emphasise GRETA recommendations in my high level meetings when appropriate. I also continue to promote the CoE convention on THB with the OSCE participating States. Thus far in 2015 I have conducted country visits to Tajikistan and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, as well a follow-up visit to Azerbaijan to assess the country’s implementation of anti-trafficking recommendations made in the official report we issued after a previous visit in 2012. Additional trips are scheduled for the autumn, including to Turkey. I hope to conduct country visits to the Czech Republic, the Russian Federation, and the USA in 2016. We also provide follow up technical assistance across the OSCE region upon request.

Since I took Office, we have held two joint workshops together with the Council of Europe here in Strasbourg, as was already mentioned by Petya, bringing together judges and prosecutors and a range of international experts to discuss key challenges in supporting the legal rights of human trafficking victims. We recently held a two-day roundtable in Minsk where leading experts from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus exchanged good practices and shared their knowledge as part of an effort to combat child trafficking in the region, bringing together the partners of our programme to teach crucial life and professional skills to children without parental care on both sides of the Dniester River. Our Office is also spearheading an initiative in Ukraine to raise awareness about human trafficking among OSCE monitors to improve their ability to identify cases of THB during the ongoing crisis. As a result, I travel to the country frequently, and most recently visited Dnepropetrovsk and Kharkiv.

Each year we host the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons* conference at the Hofburg in Vienna, which provides participating States with expertise and knowledge on the latest trends, activities, challenges, and good practices in combating modern day slavery carried out by governments, international organizations, NGOs, trade unions, academia and other actors. Last November, last year, our 14th Alliance conference focused on ethical issues in preventing and combating human trafficking, and there we held a joint side event with the CoE. At this year’s conference, we will discuss how to combat human trafficking along migration routes, a topic that has become increasingly relevant in light of the recent tragedies in the Mediterranean, and which was agreed upon after consulting with our AECT partners at our last meeting in December. The 15th Alliance Conference will take place on 6-7 July and I warmly invite you to participate.

In addition, at our initiative, we have recently worked with the CoE and UNODC to avoid duplication, to improve data collection and sharing and to consider a pilot project for a centralized/shared database between UNODC, COE and OSCE. We will conduct a survey of our participating States, which we will share a draft questionnaire for peer review with CoE and UNODC and a few other partners who are also involved in data collection.

Finally, my office is currently developing an annotated Commentary to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and the 2013 Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: One Decade Later, which we plan to publish this Fall. The Commentary is intended to guide participating States in the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the Action Plan. It will show the comprehensive nature of the recommendations and their coherence with the international and regional legal obligations. It will also provide examples of good practices developed and implemented to address the most challenging and under-estimated forms of human trafficking. In addition, the Commentary will show the role of multiple stakeholders, including the CoE, in the prevention of THB, prosecution and protection. It will demonstrate the significance of better co-operation at all levels to achieve the common goal of ending modern-day slavery.

The task is daunting, as there is much work to be done, and thus each one of us must do our part. We are ready to support our participating States, and to continue to strengthen our co-operation with our partners, especially our close partner here at the Council of Europe.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix X

Statement made by Ms Elisa Trossero, Programme Manager, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Distinguished members of the Committee of the Parties,

Dear colleagues and partners,

It is a great pleasure for ICMPD to participate in this meeting of the Committee of Parties. Let me **commend the Council of Europe and GRETA** for the outstanding work in compiling the country evaluation reports. They represent a useful framework for providing guidance on how anti-trafficking policies shall be implemented at the national and regional level.

As announced during the Committee of the Parties meeting on 5 December 2014, the Council of Europe and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) propose a **joint initiative** aimed at strengthening the identification of and assistance to trafficked persons through efficient transnational co-operation and exchange of information.

The initiative addresses current challenges in the identification and protection of trafficked persons, building upon the foundation laid down by **ICMPD's Transnational Referral Mechanism (TRM)**, implemented across a number of EU and South-Eastern European countries present here today. The initiative complies with Article 32 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in terms of international co-operation "through the application of relevant applicable international and regional instruments".

As we heard today, the **country evaluation reports of GRETA** recommend the adoption of a multi-agency approach to the identification and referral of victims of trafficking. In addition to law enforcement agencies, such an approach should involve a variety of frontline actors, such as labour inspectors, social workers, medical staff and NGOs, and ensure appropriate co-ordination and exchange of information among relevant stakeholders.

The joint Council of Europe-ICMPD initiative **aligns with the EU Strategy** towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012-16, as the development of an **EU TRM** is a priority for 2015 and more specifically strengthen the implementation of Article 11 of the **EU Directive** on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

The proposed initiative was discussed and received a positive response on 30-31 March 2015 during a meeting of **National Anti-trafficking coordinators of Central and South Eastern Europe** held in Vienna co-organised by ICMPD and the British Embassy. The purpose of the meeting was to identify how international cooperation can be strengthened across the region.

The overall objective of the initiative is to **increase the identification of trafficked persons** in particular among vulnerable group. It is proposed that three distinct and complementary components are devised to enhance existing mechanisms, adapt to changing realities and link tailor-made mechanisms of referral in selected countries, as follows:

- 1) Broadening the group of anti-trafficking actors involved in transnational referral of trafficked persons such as ministries of labour, social affairs and welfare, private sector stakeholders as well as civil society;
- 2) Developing tailored measures for the protection of vulnerable group to trafficking and increase knowledge and capacity of the relevant stakeholders on management of trafficking cases;
- 3) Encouraging partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination to standardise existing procedures for identification, referral and social inclusion.

The proposed action also seeks to **strengthen the capacity** of participating countries for efficient transnational co-operation and exchange of information between responsible authorities, thus **clusters of countries** will be identified to maximise the impact of interventions.

With my intervention today I would like to draw your attention to this initiative and seek for further interest in joining this endeavour. A brief information note has been distributed by the Council of Europe Secretariat and will be distributed again tomorrow during the Conference.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.