

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Focus on Victims' Rights

Conference marking the 10th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

Strasbourg, 16 June 2015

Draft concluding remarks by Ambassador Pekka HYVÖNEN, Chair of the Committee of the Parties

- Today's conference has demonstrated that the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is as relevant as it was 10 years ago for combating trafficking in human beings from a human-rights perspective.
- The Council of Europe must ensure a pan-European response to human trafficking challenges, using the tools provided by this Convention and other relevant instruments. As a short-term objective, we should aim at getting on board all Council of Europe member States (only five countries remain to join). As Chair of the Committee of the Parties to the Convention, I urge these countries to take the necessary steps towards the signature and ratification of the Convention without delay.
- In the medium-term perspective, we should aim at expanding the application of the Convention beyond the European continent, so that its high standards and collaborative frameworks can benefit other regions as well.
- The Committee of the Parties welcomes GRETA's track record of diagnosing implementation weaknesses. The challenge now is to ensure proper follow-up of GRETA's findings and recommendations. In other words, we need to ensure impact. As we heard today, there are many positive examples of countries acting upon GRETA's recommendations, by amending legislation, adopting new strategies or action plans, as well as taking practical steps to support victims in the exercise of their rights. The recent announcements in both Ireland and the Netherlands that GRETA's recommendations have induced the government to reconsider their identification procedures are an illustration of such an impact.
- The role of the Committee of the Parties, as the political pillar of the monitoring mechanism of the Convention, is to ensure the implementation of GRETA's conclusions, not to minimise them.
- The Committee of the Parties will continue exercising peer pressure and providing a forum for exchange. In the future, for the second round of evaluation of the Convention, the Committee of the Parties may consider setting different deadlines for States to report back on the implementation of the three most urgent recommendations.
- The Committee of the Parties must also continue to play its part in ensuring that GRETA's future compositions remain as qualified and multidisciplinary as they have been.

- It is important to continue regular exchanges between the two pillars of the monitoring mechanism of the Convention to achieve the purpose of the Convention.