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

23rd meeting of the Committee of the Parties

(Strasbourg, 9 November 2018)

MEETING REPORT

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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 23rd meeting on 9 November 2018 in Strasbourg.
2. The meeting was opened by the Chair of the Committee of the Parties, Ambassador Christopher Yvon, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe. He invited the Committee to adopt the draft agenda. The agenda, as adopted by the Committee, is set out in Appendix I. The list of participants is set out in Appendix II.
3. The Chair welcomed the experts from States Parties who had travelled from capitals to attend the meeting. Further, he welcomed Ms Suzan Hoff, International Coordinator of the NGO La Strada International, who was attending the meeting pursuant to Rule 2c of the Committee's Rules of Procedure, which envisaged the presence of relevant international organisations and international NGOs as observers.

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

4. The Chair invited Ms Siobhán Mullally, President of GRETA, to take the floor for the periodic exchange of views with the Committee of the Parties.
5. The President of GRETA referred to the statement made by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the ministerial meeting in Elsinore, in which he spoke about the imperative to "tackle the growing – and horrifying – menace of forced labour" and to ensure that the European continent is free from modern slavery. Ms Mullally noted that the expression "modern slavery" was used as an umbrella term to describe a range of egregious human rights violations, including trafficking in human beings. GRETA's 7th General report, published in April 2018, had highlighted the particular challenges of human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, looking at trends, challenges and promising practices.
6. Further, the President of GRETA presented the main findings from GRETA's reports concerning Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Ukraine (second evaluation round) and Estonia (first evaluation round), which were the subject of draft recommendations by the Committee of the Parties at the meeting. She also informed the Committee that GRETA had decided that the third evaluation round of the Convention, which was about to be launched by GRETA, would focus on trafficking victims' access to justice and effective remedies. Ms Mullally's statement is reproduced in full in Appendix III.
7. The Chair thanked Ms Mullally for her presentation and opened the floor for questions or comments concerning GRETA's work. Ambassador Joseph Filletti (Malta) thanked the President of GRETA for her presentation and noted that the Maltese authorities had implemented most of the recommendations made in GRETA's second evaluation report.
8. Ambassador Gilles Heyvaert (Belgium) thanked Ms Mullally for her excellent work and affirmed the Belgian authorities' support for the work of GRETA. He asked if there was search for a definition of modern slavery. Ms Mullally noted that while there was no legal definition of "modern slavery", the various offences that it was used as being synonymous of were well defined in international law. The Executive Secretary added that the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) was working on a draft document concerning the legal basis and implications of the discourse on "modern slavery".
9. The Chair of the Committee recalled that this was the last exchange of the Committee with Ms Mullally as President of GRETA. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair warmly thanked Ms Mullally for her commitment, hard work and leadership of GRETA, and for ensuring that the standards of the Council of Europe were promoted internationally.

Agenda item 4: Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Estonia (first evaluation round) and Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Ukraine (second evaluation round) and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties

10. The Chair noted that GRETA had adopted final reports concerning the implementation of the Convention by Estonia (1st evaluation round) and Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Ukraine (2nd evaluation round), which had been sent to the national authorities for final comments and, following the comments' receipt, some of the reports had already been made public. The seven draft recommendations based on these reports had been made available to the Committee on 17 October 2018.

4.1 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Estonia

11. The Chair recalled that the draft recommendation on Estonia followed the format of recommendations adopted in the context of the first evaluation round, setting a two-year deadline for informing the Committee of measures taken.

12. Ms Kerli Tiik, representative of Estonia, stated that the Estonian authorities welcomed GRETA's evaluation report and recommendations and affirmed their commitment to combating human trafficking, including through continued engagement in international co-operation. Ms Tiik informed the Committee of efforts made to assist and protect victims of trafficking, and confirmed the Estonian authorities' determination to further strengthen the fight against trafficking by providing more training to relevant officials, addressing demand for all forms of exploitation, and enhancing efforts to prosecute traffickers.

13. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Estonia and decided to request that the Estonian Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2020.

4.2 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Azerbaijan

14. The Chair noted that the draft recommendation to the authorities of Azerbaijan, as well as the subsequent recommendations to the authorities of Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Ukraine, followed the format of the recommendations adopted by the Committee in the context of the second evaluation round, and requested the national authorities to report on measures taken to address the most urgent issues identified in GRETA's report within one year of the adoption of recommendations by the Committee of the Parties.

15. Mr Agil Gunashov, representative of Azerbaijan, thanked the President of GRETA for her presentation and excellent work, and expressed the gratitude of the Azerbaijani authorities for the constructive co-operation with GRETA and their commitment to pursuing a comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking. He informed the Committee that the current National Action Plan on combating trafficking in human beings was coming to an end in 2018, and that the Government would take into account GRETA's recommendations when preparing the new National Action Plan.

16. The President of GRETA, noting the commitment of the Azerbaijani authorities, stressed the need to tackle trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, and highlighted the critical role of civil society in prevention of trafficking and the provision of assistance to victims.

17. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Azerbaijan and decided to request that the Azerbaijani Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2019.

18. Ms Astghik Baldryan, representative of Armenia, read out a statement concerning the footnote on page 36 of GRETA's second evaluation report on Azerbaijan, and requested that the statement be included in the meeting report. The statement can be found in Appendix IV.

4.3 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Luxembourg

19. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Luxembourg.

20. Ambassador Müller (Luxembourg) thanked the President of GRETA for her presentation and her unflinching efforts, and noted that GRETA's report had been fully taken into account by the national authorities.

21. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Luxembourg and decided to request that the Luxembourg Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2019.

4.4 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of the Netherlands

22. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning the Netherlands.

23. Ambassador Roeland Böcker (the Netherlands) thanked GRETA and its President for the constructive dialogue with the Dutch authorities and confirmed that action against trafficking remained a priority for the Netherlands.

24. Ms Evelin Pennings, Senior Policy Advisor in the Ministry of Justice and Security, thanked GRETA for the recommendations made in its second report on the Netherlands and the constructive dialogue pursued in the course of the evaluation. She noted that the report recognises the progress made by the Netherlands in several areas, while calling for action to address some remaining gaps. Ms Pennings indicated that two of these gaps were already being addressed. A new National Action Plan, developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector, was in the process of approval by the Government. Further, amendments made on 1 October 2018 to the Aliens' Circular had clarified the criteria to granting a recovery and reflection period. As regards the third urgent recommendation, which concerned the provision of assistance to victims of trafficking beyond the recovery and reflection period, Ms Pennings argued that the approach of the Dutch authorities to grant residence permit to victims who co-operated with the criminal investigation struck the right balance and was in line with the Convention.

25. The President of GRETA welcomed the new developments referred to by Ms Pennings. Further, she noted that the Convention provided for the issuance of residence permits both on the basis of the victims' personal circumstances and their co-operation with the investigation/prosecution, and that GRETA encouraged States Parties to make both options available to victims.

26. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of the Netherlands and decided to request that the Dutch Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2019.

4.5 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Sweden

27. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Sweden.

28. Ms Eva-Lena Wahlin, Legal Adviser in the Ministry of Justice of Sweden, expressed her sincere appreciation of GRETA's work. She informed the Committee of some recent developments, such as the decision that all human trafficking cases would be handled by the International Prosecutor's Department, as well as of the issuing of guidelines for prosecutors and amendments made to the criminal law. In March 2018 the Swedish authorities had launched a public inquiry as to whether legal amendments were needed in order to incriminate early and forced child marriages, "honour" crimes and forced marriages abroad involving children, as conducts subsidiary to trafficking offence. Ms Wahlin also informed the Committee that the NGO platform "Civil Society against Human Trafficking" continued receiving financing from the State budget. The full text of Ms Wahlin's statement appears in Appendix V of this report.

29. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Sweden and decided to request that the Swedish Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2019.

4.6 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Spain

30. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Spain.

31. Mr Juan Ignacio Iquino Lafuente, representative of Spain, thanked GRETA for the constructive approach during the conduct of the second evaluation, and the resulting report and recommendations. He stressed that regardless of the changes in the Spanish Government and other political developments affecting the Spanish Parliament, which temporarily halted important legislative reforms, action against trafficking in human beings remained a priority for the Spanish authorities.

32. The President of GRETA acknowledged the impact of the fluctuating political situation of the anti-trafficking agenda and recalled the importance of addressing trafficking for labour exploitation and child trafficking.

33. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Spain and decided to request that the Spanish Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2019.

4.7 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Ukraine

34. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft recommendation concerning Ukraine.

35. Mr Serhii Shablii, representative of Ukraine, thanked the President of GRETA for the constructive co-operation with the Ukrainian authorities and the second evaluation report of Ukraine's implementation of the Convention.

36. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Ukraine and decided to request that the Ukrainian Government inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 9 November 2019.

Agenda item 5: Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties' recommendations

37. The Chair recalled that at its 20th meeting on 10 March 2017 the Committee had adopted recommendations concerning the implementation of the Convention by Armenia, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, requesting the authorities to inform the Committee of measures taken to comply with them within a one-year period. These four national reports had been submitted on time and were made available on the Committee's restricted website. Further, the Chair recalled that at the Committee's 21st meeting on 13 October 2017, recommendations had been adopted concerning the implementation of the Convention by Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Ireland and Norway, requesting the authorities to inform the Committee of measures taken to comply with them within a one-year period. The national reports from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland and Norway had been submitted on time and were made available on the Committee's restricted website.

38. The Chair noted that the French authorities have requested an extension of the deadline for submitting their report in reply to the Committee of the Parties' recommendation. Mr Goujon-Ficher, representative of France, explained that the delay was due to the on-going process of preparation of the second National Action Plan on combating trafficking in human beings, which involved a consultation with civil society. He noted that the protection of children from trafficking would be amongst the priorities of the new Plan, which was expected to be adopted at the latest in early 2019. Mr Goujon-Ficher also indicated that the report of the French authorities would be provided by the end of November 2018.

39. The President of GRETA expressed concern about the delay by France in adopting a new National Action Plan and submitting a report to the Committee of the Parties. She referred to an ongoing exchange between GRETA and the French authorities concerning some urgent issues which remained to be addressed, following concerns expressed by civil society.

40. The Chair invited the representative of Armenia to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the Armenian authorities.

41. Ms Astghik Baldryan, representative of Armenia, noted that the Armenian authorities remained committed to implementing the recommendations and were ready to continue the fruitful co-operation with GRETA. Her statement appears in Appendix VI of this report.

42. The President of GRETA noted that while a new health inspectorate service had been established on 21 August 2017, it appeared to have no role in preventing and detecting trafficking for labour exploitation. In addition, recruitment and temporary work agencies remained unlicensed and continued operating without the effective monitoring. The President of GRETA also referred to the on-going reform of the child protection system aiming to reorganise orphanages and boarding schools into smaller-scale child care facilities and strengthen foster care. However, no information had been provided on measures taken to address the vulnerability of girls from the Yazidi community and children placed in child care institutions. Further, no systematic measures were reported to improve victims' access to timely medical assistance and emergency treatment. The State budget continued covering only part of the expenses of assistance provided to victims of trafficking by NGOs. Moreover, it appeared that no improvements had taken place regarding improving of victims' access to compensation from the offenders, and encouraging prosecutors and the judiciary to seize and confiscate criminals' assets in trafficking cases.

43. The Chair invited the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

44. Ambassador Predrag Grgić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) expressed the appreciation of the Bosnian authorities for GRETA's work and underlined that the findings of GRETA's second evaluation report served as the basis for action against trafficking in human beings in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

45. The President of GRETA noted that according to the information provided by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the new Law on Providing Free Legal Aid entitled victims of trafficking to free legal aid and included the possibility of making compensation claims on victims' behalf in criminal proceedings. It was also planned to provide training on the new Guidelines on identification of victims to key actors and practitioners within the Regional Monitoring Teams. However, the majority of GRETA's recommendations remained to be addressed. These included the setting up a comprehensive data collection system on human trafficking, enhancing efforts to prevent child trafficking, ensuring that all victims of trafficking received adequate assistance in accordance with their needs, improving the identification of and assistance to child victims of trafficking, and facilitating and guarantee access to compensation for victims, including State compensation.

46. The Chair invited the representative of Ireland to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the Irish authorities.

47. Mr Conor Nelson, representative of Ireland, thanked GRETA, the Committee of the Parties and the Secretariat for the constructive engagement with Ireland in monitoring action against trafficking in human beings. He informed the Committee of the on-going review of the victim identification procedures, which aimed at providing a more robust and accountable system for meeting victims' needs, applicable to all victims. Further, Mr Nelson noted the increase in State funding to NGOs providing assistance services to victims of trafficking, which by the end of 2018 would have reached €600 000. Finally, Mr Nelson warmly thanked the President of GRETA for the dedication and professionalism demonstrated while serving on GRETA. The text of Mr Nelson's presentation appears in Appendix VII.

48. The Executive Secretary of the Convention drew the Committee's attention to a letter received on 2 November 2018 from the Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), containing the Commission's observations relating to the implementation of recommendation of the Committee of the Parties by Ireland. In particular, the IHREC had appeared as *amicus curiae* in a case before the Irish High Court challenging the adequacy of existing administrative procedures for the identification and referral of victims of trafficking. The High Court judgment had concluded that there was a need to place protection and assistance measures for victims of trafficking on a statutory basis, in line with GRETA's recommendation. Further, similar to GRETA's conclusion, the IHREC had noted that the Atypical Working Scheme in the Irish fisheries industry did not provide sufficient safeguards against human trafficking and exploitation. In this respect, the IHREC was authorised by the High Court to intervene as *amicus curiae* in a case taken by the International Transport Workers' Federation. In addition, Ms Nestorova referred to an urgent recommendation contained in GRETA's second report on Ireland regarding the absence of specialised shelters providing accommodation and assistance to victims of trafficking, which remained to be implemented.

49. The Chair invited the representative of Latvia to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the Latvian authorities.

50. Ambassador Ivars Pundurs (Latvia) thanked GRETA and its President for the constructive approach and co-operation with the Latvian authorities in the course of the second evaluation. He stressed that the Latvian authorities highly valued GRETA's work and continued to carry out activities implementing its recommendations.

51. The President of GRETA noted that according to the report submitted by the Latvian authorities, several recommendations were in the process of implementation, in particular improving the identification of victims of trafficking and providing training to the State Labour Inspectorate. The authorities had also reported amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law, introducing a new concept of "specially protected victim", applicable to victims of trafficking. However, the President of GRETA noted that no information had been provided concerning outreach work to identify victims of trafficking among unaccompanied and separated foreign children. Further, no information was provided concerning the practice of detaining unaccompanied or separated foreign children, and the recommendation relating to the recovery and reflection period had not been addressed.

52. The Chair invited the representative of Malta to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the Maltese authorities.

53. Ambassador Joseph Filletti (Malta) noted his authorities' commitment to fully implementing the Committee's recommendations and stressed that the majority of them had already been implemented. The full text of Ambassador Filletti's presentation appears in Appendix VIII of this report.

54. The President of GRETA noted that according to the information provided by the Maltese authorities, the implementation of most of GRETA's recommendations was in progress, in particular relating to increasing the accommodation capacity for victims of trafficking, training of staff providing assistance to unaccompanied children, and raising awareness of police officers and prosecutors of the specific needs of child victims. However, she noted that no legislative amendments had been initiated in relation of the recovery and reflection period. Further, the report did not suggest that progress had been made regarding victims' access to compensation. In addition, the commission of a trafficking offence against a child was still not qualified as an aggravating circumstance, as required by the Convention.

55. The Chair invited the representative of Norway to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the Norwegian authorities.

56. Mr Birger Gjelsten Veum, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Norway, expressed his authorities' appreciation of the excellent co-operation with GRETA and the work carried out by GRETA. He noted that the Norwegian authorities had taken a number of measures on the issues for immediate action identified in GRETA's second evaluation report and referred to the outcome of a large human trafficking case (the so-called "Lime" case). The full text of Mr Veum's presentation appears in Appendix IX of this report.

57. The President of GRETA noted that according to the report provided by the Norwegian authorities, the implementation of some of the urgent recommendations was underway. The authorities were considering reducing the six-monthly recovery and reflection period to 45 days. However, it remained unclear whether the authorities would set up a formalised National Referral Mechanism for the identification and assistance of victims of trafficking. The authorities had also reported an increase in the grant scheme for assistance to victims of trafficking and persons in prostitution from 23 million NOK to 33 million NOK in 2018. According to the report, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children over 15 years of age, who might be victims of trafficking, would continue being accommodated in reception centres run by the Directorate of Immigration, instead of being placed in care centres operated by the National Child Welfare Service, as recommended by GRETA.

58. The Chair invited the representative of Portugal to take the floor concerning the reply to the recommendation from the Portuguese authorities.

59. Ambassador João Maria Cabral (Portugal) conveyed his authorities' appreciation of the constructive dialogue which had accompanied the second evaluation of Portugal and the useful recommendations provided by GRETA. He thanked the President of GRETA for her valuable contribution and wished her success in her future activities.

60. The President of GRETA noted that according to the report of the Portuguese authorities, some recommendations had already been implemented, in particular the establishment of a shelter for child victims of trafficking, while others were envisaged to be addressed through activities included in the 4th National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking. In response to GRETA's recommendation, the authorities had established a special fund to cover the expenses of repatriation and assistance of EU nationals. However, no information had been provided regarding the timely appointment of guardians for unaccompanied foreign children. Further, Ms Mullally indicated that the authorities had neither the intention to amend the legislation nor to develop guidance for police officers and prosecutors on the scope of the non-punishment provision. The recommendation on sentencing guidelines and addressing

gaps in the legislation, the investigation and prosecution procedure and the presentation of cases in court had not been addressed.

61. The Chair of the Committee thanked the representatives of the Parties which had submitted reports in response to the Committee's recommendations for their interventions. He also thanked the President of GRETA for her input in the consideration of the replies.

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

62. The Committee decided that the reports submitted by Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Norway and Portugal in the context of the second evaluation round would be made public on the Council of Europe's Anti-Trafficking website. The Committee agreed to send letters to these seven Parties to the Convention, asking them to provide further information on certain issues identified following their examination by GRETA.

63. The Chair informed the Committee that since its last meeting, additional information had been submitted by the authorities of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and the United Kingdom as a follow-up to the reports sent by them in reply to the Committee of the Parties' recommendations. The Committee took note of the information provided and decided to transmit it to GRETA so that it can be taken into account in the course of the third evaluation round in respect of these Parties.

Agenda item 7 – Information on activities aimed at strengthening the implementation of GRETA's conclusions and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations

64. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee of the forthcoming meeting of specialised lawyers and NGOs providing legal assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings, which would take place on 21-22 November 2018 in Strasbourg. The meeting would provide an opportunity to discuss the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights related to trafficking in human beings and the direct application of the Convention in domestic law, as well as to present the online course on human trafficking developed by the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) of the Council of Europe. It would also explore possibilities for setting up a network of trafficking victim lawyers on a practical level, to be used on a day to day basis for the purpose of working more effectively and collaboratively to protect the rights of victims.

65. Further, the Executive Secretary informed the Committee of progress in the implementation of anti-trafficking projects in Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", under the EU - Council of Europe Programmatic framework "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey", as well as plans to set up new projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey.

66. The Executive Secretary also referred to the recent organisation of a round-table meeting in Minsk, Belarus, as a follow-up to GRETA's first evaluation report and the Committee of the Parties' recommendation, which had brought together relevant public and civil society actors.

67. The Chair thanked the Executive Secretary and her team for the efforts made to develop co-operation activities with a view to strengthening the implementation of the Convention.

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

68. The Chair invited Ms Suzan Hoff, International Coordinator of the NGO La Strada International, attending as an observer, to take the floor. Ms Hoff informed the Committee of the work undertaken by 29 NGOs in 24 countries comprising the La Strada International network and the importance attached by them to the effective implementation of the Council of Europe Convention. She highlighted that among common difficulties observed in a number of countries, many related to the identification of victims, their effective access to legal aid, and the lack of shelters for victims of trafficking, especially men. Further, the implementation of the non-punishment principle, as well as access to compensation for victims of trafficking, remained a challenge. The latter aspect was being addressed through a two-year project currently implemented by La Strada International. Ms Hoff also noted that in recent years, NGOs in some countries were facing a loss of recognition by the authorities as a legitimate stakeholder in the anti-trafficking area, despite the fact that the Convention explicitly recognises the role of specialised NGOs.

69. The Chair thanked Ms Hoff for the intervention and invited the Executive Secretary to present additional information concerning activities in the area of combating trafficking in human beings. Ms Nestorova informed the Committee of ongoing work by the UNODC on assessing the implementation of the Palermo Protocol and the activities of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), which the Council of Europe had joined as a partner in 2017. ICAT had recently issued a policy brief on child trafficking and was preparing a discussion paper on "modern slavery". In addition, the Executive Secretary informed the Committee that at its next plenary meeting, GRETA would have an exchange of views with the International Criminal Court.

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

70. The Chair informed the Committee that since its last meeting on 9 February 2018, no new signatures or ratifications of the Convention had been received. He reiterated the call on the only remaining Council of Europe Member State which had not yet signed and ratified the Convention, the Russian Federation, to do so as a matter of priority.

Agenda item 10: Election of members of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)

71. The Chair recalled that the terms of office of seven of the 15 members of GRETA would expire on 31 December 2018 and that 39 Parties to the Convention had been invited to nominate candidates for GRETA membership (the remaining eight Parties to the Convention, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, continued to have nationals among the GRETA members whose mandates run until the end of 2020). The deadline for submitting candidatures was 9 September 2018, i.e. at the latest two months before the election date, as provided for in the Rule 12 of the Rules on the election procedure of the members of GRETA (CM/Res(2013)28). By that deadline, the following 16 States Parties to the Convention had proposed candidates for the election of GRETA members: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Netherland, Poland and Spain. Poland had subsequently withdrawn its candidate. Out of the total of 24 candidates, one candidate (French) had been nominated for a second term of office as member of GRETA.

10.1 Admissibility of the candidatures

72. Before proceeding with the election, the Chair invited the Committee to consider the admissibility of the candidatures for GRETA membership, taking into account Rules 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Rules on the election procedure of the members of GRETA.

73. The Chair recalled that Rule 11 of the Rules on the election procedure of the members of GRETA required Parties to ensure that the national selection procedure leading to the nomination of candidates for GRETA was in accordance with published national guidelines or otherwise transparent and designed to lead to the nomination of the most qualified candidates. He noted that Parties had not been asked specifically to provide information on national selection procedures, but in some countries there had been public calls of interest, and many Parties had nominated two or three candidates, aiming to ensure that their candidates have different professional backgrounds.

74. The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the fact that one of the candidates, Mr Kevin Hyland, nominated by Ireland, had double nationality (Irish and British). Since there was a member of GRETA from the United Kingdom and as no two members of GRETA could be nationals of the same State, a legal opinion by DLAPIL has been requested concerning the dual nationality of this candidate (document THB-CP(2018)16). The opinion provided by DLAPIL had concluded that it appeared that the effective nationality of Mr Hyland was Irish and therefore he was free to stand for election as the Irish candidate.

75. Further, the Chair recalled that Rule 10 of Resolution CM/Res(2013)28 provided that in order to help ensure gender balance among the members of GRETA, when nominating more than one candidate each Party shall take all the necessary and appropriate steps with a view to nominating at least one man and one woman. The Chair informed the Committee that Hungary had proposed three candidates, all of whom were women, and in accordance with Rule 10, paragraph 2, of Resolution CM/Res(2013)28, he invited the representative of Hungary to provide an explanation. Mr Gergő Kocsis, representative of Hungary, informed the Committee that the national selection procedure had resulted in selecting the three most qualified candidates, who were all women. In the light of this explanation, the Committee decided to accept the list of candidates submitted by Hungary.

10.2 Assessment of whether the candidates meet the requirements for membership of GRETA

76. The Chair recalled that pursuant to Article 36 of the Convention, members of GRETA shall be chosen among persons of high moral character, known for their recognised competence in the fields of human rights, assistance and protection of victims and action against trafficking in human beings or having professional experience in the areas covered by the Convention. They shall sit in their individual capacity, shall be independent and impartial, and shall be available to serve GRETA effectively. Candidates must have a good command of one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French).

77. Further, the Chair recalled that Rule 3 of Resolution CM/Res(2013)28 specified that individuals holding decision-making positions as regards defining and/or implementing policies in the field of action against trafficking in human beings in government or in any other organisation or entity, which may give rise to a conflict of interest with the responsibilities inherent to membership of GRETA, shall not be eligible. He noted that the independence and impartiality of GRETA members was not put into question by the mere fact that they were civil servants or otherwise employed by the public sector, but by holding decision-making positions in governmental or other organisation defining or implementing anti-trafficking policies.

78. The Chair noted that the candidate from Azerbaijan, Mr Ilkin Gurbanov, was the contact person to liaise with GRETA, and in case he was elected as GRETA member, he should no longer act as a contact person for GRETA and another relevant official should be appointed to fulfil this role.

79. Further, the Chair noted that a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe had been received of 4 September 2018 from the NGO "Agora International Human Rights Group", expressing criticism about the national selection procedure of GRETA candidates in Bulgaria. A similar letter had been received from the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. By letter of 17 September 2018, the Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria and Chairman of the Bulgarian National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings had provided information on the national selection procedure.

80. Ambassador Katya Todorova (Bulgaria) reassured the Committee that the national competition had been held in conformity with Article 36 of the Convention and Resolution CM(2013)28. In particular, she noted that the transparency requirements had been observed, a selection board had been appointed, and following the receipt of three applications, the candidates had been interviewed and assessed and the one with the highest score had been selected for presentation as a candidate for GRETA membership.

81. The Chair also noted that several civil society organisations has addressed letters to the Committee, expressing their support for different candidates (document THB-CP(2018)18-Add).

10.3. Election of seven members of GRETA

82. The Chair referred to the Explanatory note on the procedure to be followed to elect GRETA members which had been prepared by the Secretariat (THB-CP(2018)17) and recalled the rules for the election of GRETA members contained in Resolution CM/Res(2013)28.

83. Further, the Chair drew the Committee's attention to the fact that out of the eight serving GRETA members whose terms of office continue until 31 December 2020, six were men and only two were women, and therefore it would be important to ensure that the new composition of GRETA is gender balanced. As regards the professional background of these eight members, there were three prosecutors, two academics, a police officer, a psychologist and a civil society representative. Thus, professional backgrounds currently under-represented in GRETA included persons working directly with victims of trafficking (e.g. in the identification procedure, the provision of legal, psychological or medical assistance to victims, the running of shelters), child protection specialists, judges and labour inspectors with experience in the anti-trafficking area. The Chair noted that as the elections proceeded, he would periodically take stock of the emerging composition of GRETA, with the help of the Secretariat, in order to draw the Committee's attention to any imbalances.

84. Following an invitation from the Chair, representatives of Parties which had proposed more than one candidate for GRETA indicated their preferences for particular candidates.

85. The Chair informed the Committee that equipment for electronic voting had been provided for the meeting, which ensured the secrecy of the ballot and calculated the results of the voting. Following an introduction of the electronic voting system by Mr Bastian Vinchon, representative of the company providing the equipment, members of the Committee ran two test votes.

86. The Committee proceeded with the election of seven members of GRETA by secret ballot. Following 12 rounds of voting, the Committee elected the following members of GRETA:

- Mr Francesco Curcio (Italian) – first term of office
- Ms Ia Dadunashvili (Georgian) – first term of office
- Mr Kevin Hyland (Irish) – first term of office
- Ms Nathalie Martin (French) – second term of office
- Ms Julia Planitzer (Austrian) – first term of office
- Ms Ana Revenco (Moldovan) – first term of office
- Ms Antoaneta Vassileva (Bulgarian) – first term of office.

87. The Committee congratulated the elected candidates and wished them success in their endeavours to monitor the implementation of the Convention.

Agenda item 11 – Dates of future meetings

88. The Committee decided to hold its 24th meeting on Friday, 5 April 2019.

Agenda item 12: Other business

89. The Committee noted that the second terms of office of the current Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee would expire on 9 February 2019. Pending the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair at its next meeting, the Committee agreed to entrust the current Chair and Vice-Chair with a “caretaker role” in the interim period, for the purposes of preparing the 24th meeting of the Committee and paving the way for the election of the new Chair and Vice-Chair.

Agenda item 13: Adoption of the list of decisions taken

90. 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 Estonia (first evaluation round) and Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and Ukraine (second evaluation round) and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties**
 - First evaluation round*
 - 4.1 Estonia
 - Second evaluation round*
 - 4.2 Azerbaijan
 - 4.3 Luxembourg
 - 4.4 The Netherlands
 - 4.5 Spain
 - 4.6 Sweden
 - 4.7 Ukraine
- 5. Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations**
 - 5.1 Armenia
 - 5.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - 5.3 France
 - 5.4 Ireland
 - 5.5 Latvia
 - 5.6 Malta
 - 5.7 Norway
 - 5.8 Portugal
- 6. Follow up to be given to Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations**
- 7. Information on 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 of interest to the Committee of the Parties**
- 9. State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**
- 10. Election of members of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)**
 - 10.1 Admissibility of the candidatures (rule 8, rule 9, paragraph 1, and rule 11 of CM/Res(2013)28)
 - 10.2 Assessment of whether the candidates meet the requirements for membership of GRETA (rule 2, rule 3, rule 4, and rule 9, paragraph 4, of CM/Res(2013)28)
 - 10.3 Election of seven members of GRETA
- 11. Dates of future meetings**
- 12. Other business**
- 13. Adoption of the list of decisions taken**

Appendix II

List of participants / Liste de participants

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Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe

Ms Avenilda Doko
Deputy Permanent Representative

ANDORRA / ANDORRE

M. Josep Areny Ache
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentant Permanent auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mme Geraldine Sasplugas Requena
Représentante Permanente Adjointe

ARMENIA / ARMÉNIE

Mr Paruyr Hovhannisyan
Ambassador
Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe

Ms Astghik Baldryan
Deputy to the Permanent Representative

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

Mr Andreas Bilgeri
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Stefanie Haller

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN

Mr Agil Gunashov
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

BELARUS/ BÉLARUS

M. Andrei Sukhorenko
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auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mr Nikita Belinchinko
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Mme Sabahka Radjo
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GROUP OF EXPERTS ON ACTION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS / GROUPE D'EXPERTS SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LA TRAITE DES ETRES HUMAINS (GRETA)

Ms Siobhán Mullally
President of GRETA

Secretariat / Secrétariat

Directorate General of Democracy / Direction générale de la Démocratie

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Interpreters / Interprètes

Mr Nicolas Guittonneau

Ms Cynera Jaffrey

Ms Gillian Wakenhut

Appendix III

Statement by Ms Siobhán Mullally, President of GRETA

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Earlier this year the Secretary General of the Council of Europe spoke about the imperative to “tackle the growing – and horrifying – menace of forced labour” and to ensure that the European continent is free from modern slavery. The phenomenon of trafficking in human beings is often described as “modern-day slavery”. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, in its Explanatory Report, notes that “trafficking in human beings, with the entrapment of its victims, is the modern form of the old worldwide slave trade.” The expression “modern slavery” is used as an umbrella term to describe a range of egregious human rights violations, including trafficking in human beings (for different types of exploitation, including sexual, forced labour or services, slavery, servitude), forced labour, debt bondage, servitude, forced/child/servile marriage, the sale and exploitation of children, as well as any other slave-like exploitation. While there is no legal definition of “modern slavery”, the various offences that it is used as being synonymous of are well defined in international law.

GRETA’s mandate in monitoring the implementation of the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention is related to the combating “modern slavery” agenda. GRETA’s 7th General report, published in April of this year, highlighted the particular challenges of human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, looking at trends, challenges and promising practices. The great majority of the countries evaluated by GRETA have indicated an upward trend in this form of trafficking in recent years. However, victims are often reluctant to come forward as they may fear deportation or retaliation from criminal trafficking networks. Prosecutions and convictions of the perpetrators are also rare.

There are many factors enabling “modern slavery”, such as poverty, gender inequality, ethnic discrimination, social exclusion and weak protection of vulnerable persons, such as migrant workers, domestic and care workers, asylum seekers and unaccompanied or separated children. Some cases of concern businesses whose contractors and subcontractors exploit trafficked workers, and there is a growing trend of recruitment of victims via the Internet and social media. The complexity of issues related to “modern slavery” requires tackling the root causes of the phenomenon through comprehensive measures involving prevention, protection and partnerships involving public, private and civil society actors.

Since my last exchange of views with you in February this year, GRETA has held two plenary meetings, in March and July, at which it adopted **six final reports** under the second evaluation round of the CoE Anti-Trafficking Convention, concerning **Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine**, and **one final report** under the first evaluation round, concerning **Estonia**. These reports have been submitted to the Committee of the Parties for consideration and the adoption of recommendations at today’s meeting. I would like to briefly refer to some of the main findings of GRETA from these reports.

In its report on **Azerbaijan**, GRETA welcomed the legislative developments which had taken place since the first evaluation, the adoption of a new comprehensive National Action Plan on combating human trafficking, which pays particular attention to children, as well as the application in practice of the non-punishment provision.

However, GRETA urged the Azerbaijani authorities to take measures to prevent trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, including by reintroducing work place inspections by labour inspectors and regulating and monitoring the functioning of recruitment and temporary work agencies as well as the employment of migrants as domestic workers. GRETA also called upon the authorities to improve the protection of children in vulnerable situations, such as children in street situations, children from rural areas at risk of child labour and children placed in or leaving child care institutions. Further, GRETA urged the authorities to ensure that crimes related to trafficking for all types of exploitation are proactively investigated, prosecuted promptly and effectively, and lead to proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.

In **Luxembourg**, GRETA welcomed the designation of the Advisory Committee on Human Rights (CCDH) as independent National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings and the development of a roadmap which clarifies the roles and responsibilities of state and non-state actors during detection, identification and referral to assistance of victims of trafficking. GRETA was also satisfied that, in line with the recommendations made in its first report, the legislative provisions on state compensation had been amended to enable access of trafficking victims who are third-country nationals.

However, GRETA urges the Luxembourg authorities to take additional measures to ensure that all victims of trafficking in human beings are identified as such. This concerns in particular trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation, forced begging and forced criminality. Further, GRETA called on the authorities to systematically refer all presumed and identified victims of trafficking to specialised assistance services, regardless of whether the victim co-operates with the police.

In the report on the **Netherlands**, GRETA commended the increased funding for the police, the prosecution and the labour inspectorate (SZW) to deal with human trafficking cases, as well as the creation of the Victim Identification Board, an independent multidisciplinary body tasked with the identification of victims of human trafficking. Further, there have been many decisions by courts ordering perpetrators to pay compensation to victims of trafficking.

However, GRETA urged the Dutch authorities to ensure that assistance provided to foreign victims of trafficking is not dependent on investigations or prosecutions carried out, and to make sure that all possible foreign victims are consistently offered a recovery and reflection period during which they are allowed to stay in the country. Moreover, GRETA called upon the Dutch authorities to adopt a new National Action Plan against trafficking in human beings, following the expiry of the previous one in 2014.

In its report on **Spain**, GRETA welcomed the various developments in the legal and institutional framework for tackling human trafficking, including the creation of the function of “social interlocutor” at *Policía Nacional* and *Guardia Civil* with a view to reinforcing co-operation with civil society in the fight against human trafficking. GRETA also commended the increased resources for assistance and reintegration programmes for victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Other positive developments are the extension of the minimum length of the recovery and reflection period from 30 to 90 days, and the increased number of compensations granted by courts to victims of trafficking.

However, despite the progress achieved, GRETA urged the Spanish authorities to adopt as a matter of priority a comprehensive national action plan which includes measures to combat trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, as well as other forms of trafficking. To prevent trafficking for labour exploitation, GRETA recommended strengthening labour inspections, notably in the agricultural and domestic work sectors. GRETA also urged the Spanish authorities to ensure that formal identification of victims does not depend on the presence of sufficient evidence for the initiation of criminal proceedings.

In **Sweden**, GRETA noted the progress made in a number of areas, including the setting up of specialised anti-trafficking police units and the establishment of the National Support Programme which allows presumed victims of trafficking to receive assistance from civil society organisation.

However, GRETA was concerned that the adopted national action plans focus on sexual exploitation and therefore not all forms of human trafficking are sufficiently addressed. GRETA called on the Swedish authorities to strengthen their efforts to prevent unaccompanied and separated migrant and asylum-seeking children from going missing from care, including by timely appointment of guardians and adequate resourcing of the guardianship system, as well as reviewing the restrictions on family reunifications. GRETA was also concerned that the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in human trafficking cases remained low and there was a near absence of convictions for human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and child trafficking.

In its report on **Ukraine**, GRETA commended the increase in the amount of the one-time financial grant paid to victims of human trafficking and the increase in the number of victims of trafficking having received such a grant. Moreover, GRETA welcomes the decision taken by the Prosecutor General and the

Ministry of the Interior in 2017 to prioritise the fight against human trafficking and improve interagency co-operation, which has resulted in a considerable increase in the number of investigations into human trafficking cases.

However, GRETA urged the Ukrainian authorities to strengthen their efforts to prevent trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and trafficking in children, including through developing programmes to reduce the vulnerability of children in institutional care, children in street situations, IDP children, “social orphans” and children in Roma communities. GRETA also stressed the need to provide a sufficient number of places for all victims of trafficking who need safe accommodation, and to ensure adequate funding and staff to work with victims and facilitate their reintegration of victims of trafficking.

In its first report on **Estonia**, GRETA noted that measures taken in the area of prevention of human trafficking, through awareness raising, education and training of relevant professionals, in partnership with civil society. However, GRETA stressed that all persons subjected to human trafficking for different purposes of exploitation should be identified as such, regardless of whether criminal investigations into trafficking cases are initiated. For this purpose, GRETA recommended to introduce a National Referral Mechanism and provide all relevant actors with training, guidance and tools for its effective implementation. GRETA also stressed the need for a dedicated national action plan addressing human trafficking for all forms of exploitation, while taking into account the gender-dimension of trafficking and the particular vulnerability of children.

Throughout the year, GRETA has continued implementing its programme of visits under the second evaluation round and has also carried out its first evaluation visit to Turkey. By the end of the year, the great majority of the 47 Parties to the Convention would have been evaluated by GRETA for the second time and GRETA will launch the **third round of evaluation** of the Convention. GRETA has decided that the third evaluation round will focus on trafficking victims’ **access to justice and effective remedies**, which is essential for victims’ rehabilitation and reinstatement of rights and reflects the victim-centred and human-rights based approach to the fight against human trafficking which is the trademark of the Convention. A number of provisions of the Convention establishing substantive and procedural obligations are relevant to this topic. Moreover, victims of trafficking, by virtue of their status as victims of human rights violations, are entitled to effective remedies under the European Convention on Human Rights. Access to justice and effective remedies must be guaranteed, in a gender-sensitive manner, to all victims of trafficking identified on the territory and subject to the jurisdiction of State Parties, irrespective of their immigration status or presence on the national territory and notwithstanding their capacity or willingness to co-operate in the criminal investigation.

Access to justice and effective remedies is contingent on the fulfillment of a number of preconditions, including prompt and accurate identification of victims of trafficking, the provision of a recovery and reflection period, the availability of material, psychological, medical and legal assistance, regularisation of the victim’s stay, the right to seek and enjoy asylum, repatriation and return, and the application of the principle of *non-refoulement*. These preconditions, corresponding to different provisions of the Convention, have been examined at length during the first and second evaluation rounds. Consequently, GRETA will ask each State Party for an update on the implementation of GRETA’s previous recommendations on selected topics, through a separate country-specific questionnaire.

This is the last meeting of the Committee of the Parties which I attend in my role as President of GRETA. The terms of office of seven GRETA members, including myself, will expire at the end of this year. I hope that today’s election to fill the vacant seats will ensure a gender and geographic balance and will preserve the professional diversity of GRETA’s membership. An effective monitoring system relies on the professionalism, availability, dedication and independence of the experts to whom the task is entrusted.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix IV

Statement by Ms Astghik Baldryan, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Armenia

Mr Chairman,

Dear colleagues,

We would like to express our objection regarding the text of the footnote on the page 36 of the GRETA Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Azerbaijan.

The text presents one sided political position, which is in clear contradiction with the relevant documents and statements by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship, which is the only internationally mandated format to deal with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Mr Chairman,

I would appreciate if my statement is included in the report of this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix V

Statement by Ms Eva-Lena Wahlin, Legal Adviser, Ministry of Justice of Sweden

Sweden would like to extend its sincere appreciation of the extensive work and efforts carried out by GRETA and the Secretariat during the process of Sweden's second evaluation round and in preparing the final report. In Sweden's view, the second evaluation round has truly been valuable in highlighting the struggle against trafficking in human beings. It has also been an important reminder of the need for continuous enhancement of measures in this field. Sweden is looking forward to the continued cooperation and dialogue with GRETA.

Sweden finds that GRETA's report and its proposals are valuable for the work ahead and the report will, of course, be thoroughly considered. Sweden intends to keep the Council of Europe informed on future developments. At this point however, I would like to mention just a few recent developments of relevance to the report.

In March 2018, Sweden's Prosecutor-General decided that all cases of trafficking in human beings shall be handled by the National Public Prosecution Department against International and Organised crime. This applies to new cases overtaken by prosecutors since 1 April 2018. Additionally, it has been decided that the Prosecution Authority will design and communicate guidelines, aiming to ensure that all prosecutors at the public prosecution offices have fundamental knowledge of trafficking in human beings. These guidelines will be completed by the end of 2018.

On 1 July 2018, several amendments to the Swedish anti-trafficking legislation entered into force. The amendments were introduced into the Swedish Criminal Code and entail, inter alia, certain changes to the criminal provision on trafficking in human beings and the introduction of a new criminal provision on exploitation of human beings. The overall aim of these amendments is to strengthen criminal law protection against both trafficking in human beings, and exploitation of persons for work or begging in cases not covered by the scope of the anti-trafficking provision.

In August 2018, a seventh Regional Coordinator against trafficking in human beings was established, meaning that there now are Regional Coordinators in all of Sweden's seven police regions.

From mid-July to mid-October 2018, Swedish courts reached guilty verdicts in four cases of trafficking in human beings. In these cases, a total of seven persons were convicted to sentences ranging from two up to four years of imprisonment. Two of the cases concerned trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the remaining two cases trafficking for other purposes.

As mentioned in paragraph 174 of GRETA's report, in March 2017 a public inquiry was commissioned to analyse whether legislative changes or changes to the implementation of existing rules would be necessary in order to better prevent child marriages, forced marriages and honour crimes. In August 2018, the inquiry submitted its final report, entitled Increased protection against honour-related crime (Swedish Government Official Report 2018:69). The inquiry includes proposals on, inter alia, the introduction of a new criminal provision regarding child marriage, the introduction of a special ground for more severe penalties for offences with honour motives and furthermore, that the criminal provisions on coercion to marry and luring a person into travelling abroad for the purpose of a forced marriage explicitly be made subsidiary to the provision on trafficking in human beings. The next step in the legislative procedure is to refer the inquiry's report for consultation.

Regarding trafficking in children, it may also be added that in March 2018 the County Administrative Board of Stockholm published a report on trafficking in human beings and on the life conditions of vulnerable child-groups. Also, in October 2018 the National Board of Health and Welfare presented an information brochure for social services. The information brochure is about investigating children's needs for support and protection in transnational cases, where children have been victims of trafficking and/or sexual abuse. The information brochure will be spread to the social services during 2018.

With respect to the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs, referred to in paragraph 90 of GRETA's report, it can be mentioned that in August 2018 the Government assigned an ongoing inquiry concerning legislation on organ donation with the task of carrying out an analysis pertaining to the potential signature and ratification of the convention by Sweden.

It can also be mentioned that in April 2018 the Government approved an application for funding for 2018 from the Platform Swedish Civil Society against Human Trafficking. The Platform will submit a final report in March 2019.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix VI

Statement by Ms Astghik Baldryan, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Armenia

Mr Chairman,

Madame President,

Dear colleagues,

We took note of the comments regarding the second interim report of Armenia on implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee of the Parties.

Implementation of some of those recommendations is still ongoing and we are committed to fulfil them. We look forward to continue close and fruitful cooperation with GRETA.

Thank you.

Appendix VII

Statement by Mr Conor Nelson, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Ireland

Good morning,

Could I first of all join others in complementing Professor Mullally for the contribution that she has made to the work of GRETA.

This issue of human trafficking is a priority for Ireland and we take our Convention obligations very seriously. As such, our legislative and policy framework places an emphasis on the human rights-based and victim-centred approach.

As a State that had the benefit of a second round evaluation by GRETA in 2016, Ireland very much welcomes the role undertaken by GRETA in evaluating the international community's response in the fight against this heinous crime.

The Recommendations endorsed by the Committee of the Parties themselves cover a very broad range of policy and procedures and I would like to highlight some of the steps taken by Ireland in the last year in response to those Recommendations.

The ongoing review of the victim identification procedures supported by GRETA is nearing completion and it is envisaged that we will be in a position to implement new procedures in 2019. While we judge our current system as one that has served the majority of victims of trafficking well, it is intended that our improved mechanism will provide a more robust and accountable system for meeting victims' needs. It is important to restate that it has always been the policy of Ireland that identification applies to all victims, including EEA and Irish citizens and asylum seekers, and that this has been documented through all of the Government's annual reports on human trafficking.

Support for victims is the cornerstone of our approach in combatting trafficking. As part of our commitments under our Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in Ireland, we are also reviewing the approach we take regarding accommodation provision and we hope to make worthwhile improvements in this area over the next few months.

In the last year we have further increased State funding to NGOs. By the end of 2018 we will have disbursed over €600,000 to NGOs for services to victims of trafficking and associated projects. This funding allows NGOs to do what they do best, complementing the work of the State in responding to the needs of victims.

We see training of front-line responders as vital in the identification of trafficking within our country, and have further bolstered our training programme in the past year. In addition to the basic training already delivered to 3000+ members of our police force to date, specialised training has been recently designed for our immigration officers, allowing for the early detection and referral of victims, which we consider essential in amending the damage and trauma caused by their ordeals.

We believe that a unified approach is the most effective tactic we can take in opposing this crime. We have focused our efforts in creating strong inter-agency relationships both domestically and with our international partners and we remain committed to an inclusive approach to policy making, involving all relevant stakeholders such as law enforcement, immigration, civil society and other bodies.

We note that some of the Recommendations have implications for structures that are independent of Government, such as the judiciary and the prosecution service. However we are committed to supporting awareness and training measures in these structures as appropriate. With regard to the non-punishment of victims of trafficking, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has extensive guidance for prosecutors. Human trafficking is cited as a specific example to be taken into account in deciding whether to commence or continue a prosecution.

I would like to conclude by thanking the GRETA Secretariat and the Committee of the Parties for their constructive engagement with Ireland in monitoring our response to human trafficking.

This insidious crime is a horrific violation of human rights, and Ireland is committed to combatting it at every level possible. We will continue to strive to improve our detection and identification of victims, the support of victims, and the prosecution and conviction of traffickers.

Appendix VIII

Statement by Mr Joseph Filletti, Permanent Representative of Malta

Reference is made to the Report submitted by the Maltese authorities in reply to the recommendations made by the Committee of the Parties in connection with the Second Evaluation Report and the Committee's Recommendations on the implementation of the GRETA Convention.

This Delegation notes with satisfaction that with regard to the Action Plan implementation, the remarks on Malta are mostly positive in that the majority of measures that had to be taken were implemented and with no further action required thereto. It also notes that a number of other recommendations are in the process of being implemented in order to address the concerns pointed out in the Report or form part of on-going measures aimed at final adoption.

We reiterate Malta's commitment to fully implement the Committee's recommendations and avail itself of the opportunity to sincerely thank outgoing Chair of the Committee of the Parties Council, Professor Mullally, for her sterling work for the benefit of this Committee and GRETA and to wish her the best in all her future endeavours.

Appendix IX

Statement by Mr Birger Gjelsten Veum, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Norway

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank GRETA for excellent cooperation and work to combat the extremely serious and complex problem of human trafficking.

Norway is grateful for, and puts great emphasize on the recommendations of GRETA.

As can be read in the report submitted on 16th of October, a number of measures were taken on the issues for immediate action identified in by GRETA's second evaluation report.

On the request of the Secretariat, we have also provided information on the outcome of a larger comprehensive court criminal case concerning human trafficking. The so-called "Lime" trafficking case was ongoing before the Oslo District Court at the time of the GRETA evaluation visit to Norway in May 2016. A verdict in this complex case was passed on June 22nd 2018. 11 of the defendants were convicted of trafficking offences, along with other offences. All 11 received prison sentences from 1 year up to 9 years. They were also required to compensate the victims. The case has been appealed.