



Strasbourg, 8 September 2020

THB-CP(2020)RAP26

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

26th meeting of the Committee of the Parties

(Strasbourg, 12 June 2020)

MEETING REPORT

Table of contents

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting	4
Agenda item 2: Adoption of the draft agenda.....	4
Agenda item 3: Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee of the Parties	4
Agenda item 4: Exchange of views with the President of GRETA.....	4
Agenda item 5: Discussion on the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring process of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.....	5
Agenda item 6: Examination of GRETA’s reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic (first evaluation round), Monaco (first/second evaluation round), and Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic (third evaluation round), and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties.....	7
Agenda item 7: Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations ..	9
Agenda item 8: Follow-up to the Roadmap on strengthening action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation	11
Agenda item 9: Follow-up to Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2323 (2020) on concerted action against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants.....	12
Agenda item 10: Follow-up to the round-table “Stepping up Council of Europe action against trafficking in human beings in the digital age” (Strasbourg, 17 December 2019).....	13
Agenda item 11: Information on anti-trafficking activities of other international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties	13
Agenda item 12: State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.....	13
Agenda item 13: Dates of future meetings.....	14
Agenda item 14: Other business	14
Agenda item 15: Adoption of the list of decisions taken.....	14
Appendix I	15
Appendix II	20
Appendix III.....	26
Appendix IV	29
Appendix V.....	30
Appendix VI	31

Appendix VII	32
Appendix VIII	33
Appendix IX	34
Appendix X.....	35
Appendix XI	36
Appendix XII	38
Appendix XIII	39

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

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 26th meeting on 12 June 2020 in Strasbourg. Due to the social distancing measures and travel restrictions in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was a hybrid event, with 42 participants being physically present and 36 joining by conference call.
2. Pending the election of the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, the meeting was opened by Ms Petya Nestorova, Executive Secretary of the Convention.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the draft agenda

3. The Executive Secretary invited the Committee to adopt the revised 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: Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee of the Parties

4. The Executive Secretary recalled that the term of office of the Chair and the Vice-Chair was one year and could be renewed once. She informed the Committee that the Secretariat had received an expression of interest from Ambassador Corina Călugăru (Republic of Moldova) to continue as Chair of the Committee for a second term of office. No other candidates for the Chair were proposed. The Committee elected Ambassador Călugăru as its Chair by acclamation for a second term of office of one year.
5. Ambassador Călugăru thanked the Committee for the confidence placed in her and stated that she would strive to build upon the work accomplished by the Committee in the past and promote the Convention and its effective implementation.
6. The Chair invited members to elect a new Vice-Chair of the Committee, following the expiry of the first term of office and departure from Strasbourg of Ambassador Christopher Yvon (United Kingdom). She indicated that Ambassador Christian Meuwly (Switzerland) had expressed interest in assuming this role. No other candidates were proposed. The Committee elected Ambassador Christian Meuwly as its Vice-Chair by acclamation for a first term of office of one year.

Agenda item 4: Exchange of views with the President of GRETA

7. The Chair invited Mr Davor Derenčinović, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), to take by conference call for the periodic exchange of views with the Committee of the Parties.
8. The President of GRETA informed the Committee of the Parties that on 2 April 2020, GRETA had issued a statement on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the fight against human trafficking. GRETA had raised concerns about delays in the identification of victims of trafficking, hindered access to healthcare and shelters, reduced labour inspections, and delayed access to justice. GRETA had stressed the legal and moral obligation not to cut corners on the rights and protection of victims of human trafficking.

9. GRETA's President noted that during the period of COVID-19 emergency measures, GRETA had continued its activities on monitoring the implementation of the Convention. Despite the fact that the plenary meeting in March could not take place, GRETA had adopted three final reports by written procedure, concerning Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic. The three reports in question, the first ones to be adopted by GRETA as part of the third round of evaluation of the Convention, had been transmitted to the national authorities for final comments and subsequently made public. In early March 2020, GRETA had completed two evaluation visits, to Montenegro and Romania, but the visits to Armenia, Latvia, Malta and the United Kingdom had to be postponed to the autumn. As a result of the revision of GRETA's calendar of visits, some of the 11 visits planned to take place in 2020 would have to be postponed to 2021.

10. The President of GRETA further informed the Committee of the Parties that on 3 April 2020, GRETA had published the 9th General report on its activities, covering the calendar year 2019. The report took stock of the implementation of the Convention, on the basis of the second evaluation round reports drawn up by GRETA. According to the stocktaking, the great majority of State Parties continued to have important gaps in the identification of, and assistance to, child victims of trafficking. There are also serious shortcomings regarding the assistance provided to adult victims of trafficking. Other gaps identified in the stocktaking concerned the application of the recovery and reflection period, access to compensation, as well as compliance with the non-punishment provision. There was nevertheless some improvement in the implementation of these provisions compared to the first evaluation round, during which the proportion of countries where GRETA found gaps was higher.

11. In addition, Mr Derenčinović noted that GRETA has finalised the preparation of a guidance note aimed at strengthening the implementation of the obligation to provide international protection to victims of trafficking, as well as persons at risk of being trafficked, which would be published on the occasion of World Refugee Day, 20 June. Mr Derenčinović's statement is reproduced in full in Appendix III.

12. Ambassador Gilles Heyvaert (Belgium) asked the President of GRETA whether an increase in the number of women and children victims of trafficking had been noted in relation to the COVID-19 crisis, notably in the marginalized populations. The President of GRETA replied that their vulnerability to exploitation had been heightened by the pandemic, even though there were no statistics confirming this.

13. The Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Austria, Mr Andreas Bilgeri, raised the issue of labour exploitation in the agriculture sector, enquiring whether the pandemic and the stricter border control measures had contributed to the problem or made the sector more transparent. The President of GRETA noted that trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation remains largely undetected, even though more and more countries are taking measures to improve the identification of victims. Particular challenges concern the criminalisation of the use of services of a victim, for example by farm owners who are aware that the people working for them have been trafficked.

Agenda item 5: Discussion on the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring process of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

14. The Chair recalled that pursuant to Article 38, paragraph 7, of the Convention, the Committee of the Parties may adopt, on the basis of GRETA's reports and conclusions, recommendations addressed to the Parties concerning the measures to be taken to implement GRETA's conclusions, if necessary setting a date for submitting information on their implementation, and aiming at promoting co-operation with the Party concerned for the proper implementation of the Convention. She noted that the purpose of this provision of the Convention was to strengthen the implementation of GRETA's findings and conclusions, not to dilute or minimise them. Since the entry into force of the Convention, the Committee of the Parties, as the political pillar of the monitoring mechanism of the Convention, had consistently performed this role.

15. The Chair further reminded the Committee of the Parties that during the first evaluation round, the deadline set by the CoP for reporting back on measures taken to implement its recommendations had been two years. This deadline had been reduced to one year in the context of the second evaluation round, asking government to report back on measures taken to address the most urgent issues identified by GRETA. The Committee of the Parties has been examining reports submitted by governments following the expiry of the one-year time limit and, in consultation with GRETA, additional information on action taken has been requested. It had become clear over time that the one-year time-period was too short and in some cases, and the reports sent by governments had highlighted difficulties in making legislative or other changes so quickly. Because of this short time-line, it had also not been possible for GRETA to organise round-table meetings in different countries to discuss the implementation of the recommendations. Therefore, for the third round recommendations, the deadline for reporting back had been increased again to two years.

16. The Chair noted that the challenge was to ensure proper follow-up of GRETA's findings. She recalled that at its 24th meeting in April 2019, the Committee of the Parties had discussed action taken by State Parties to ensure the implementation of the recommendations. On this occasion, the Chair had proposed to hold thematic exchanges on certain provisions of the Convention which pose problems of implementation in a number of State Parties (e.g. the non-punishment provision, data collection). The Chair encouraged the Committee to propose possible topics for future meetings.

17. The Chair stressed that the Committee of the Parties could play an important role as a forum for exchange and peer-pressure, and should aim at expanding the application of the Convention, so that its high standards and collaborative frameworks can benefit all CoE member States as well as other regions. She invited members of the Committee to take the floor on the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring of the Convention.

18. Ambassador Roeland Böcker (Netherlands) welcomed the extension of the deadline for reporting back on the implementation of Committee of the Parties' recommendations to two years. As regards the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring process of the Convention, he took the view that the intention of the drafters of the Convention was not that the Committee of the Parties should just rubber stamp GRETA's conclusions, leaving it to the Committee to ultimately decide on the content of the recommendations which are drawn up on the basis on GRETA's report and conclusions. He noted that a State Party which disagrees with GRETA's conclusions and asks for amendments to a draft recommendation would have to provide the Committee of the Parties with convincing arguments for doing so, failing which the default position should be to follow GRETA's conclusions. He later added that the role of the Committee is to give political weight to the conclusions of GRETA and to increase the responsibility of State Parties to follow and implement GRETA's conclusion. In a similar vein of thinking, the Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Cyprus, Mr Michael Karagiorgis, noted that the Convention foresees that the Committee of the Parties issues recommendations on the basis of GRETA's reports and conclusions, and that the Committee has always held in high esteem GRETA's expertise, which does not preclude the Committee from discussing proposals for amending draft recommendations. These views were later supported by the representatives of Austria, Belgium, Hungary, San Marino and Switzerland.

19. Ambassador Janusz Stańczyk (Poland) referred to Articles 38.6 and 38.7 of the Convention, noting that the Committee of the Parties may adopt, on the basis of the report and conclusions of GRETA, recommendations addressed to Parties, which gives the Committee some margin of manoeuvre. However, the aim should be to implement GRETA's conclusions as they form the basis of the recommendation. He also stressed the importance of avoiding the use of the term "recommendations" for the outcome of GRETA's work, which is a report with conclusions. The text of Ambassador Janusz Stańczyk's statement appears in Appendix 4.

20. Ms Astghik Baldryan, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Armenia, referred to Chapter VII of the Convention, which defines the roles of GRETA and the Committee of the Parties, both being integral parts of the monitoring mechanism of the Convention. She stressed that the Committee of the Parties' role is to adopt recommendations which should rely on the conclusions of GRETA in order to ensure the effectiveness of the monitoring process. The text of Ms Baldryan's statement appears in Appendix 5.

21. Ms Dagmara Turczynska, from the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, agreed that it was important to stick to the language of the Convention.

22. Ambassador Sylvie Bollini (San Marino) referred to paragraph 369 of the Explanatory report of the Convention, which deals with the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring procedure. It indicates that "the Committee may adopt recommendation indicating the measures to be taken by the Party concerned to implement GRETA's conclusions, if necessary setting a date for submitting information on their implementation, and promoting co-operation to ensure the proper implementation of the Convention. This mechanism will ensure the respect of the independence of GRETA in its monitoring function, while introducing a "political" dimension into the dialogue between the Parties".

23. Ambassador Joan Forner Rovira (Andorra) noted that the different realities of State Parties should be taken into consideration when issuing recommendations, and that there should be sensitivity to the efforts made by the national authorities, by making recommendations which are concrete, address real problems and give the right signals. Ambassador Gilles Heyvaert (Belgium), while agreeing with the views expressed earlier by the Netherlands, noted that he understood the position of Andorra.

24. The Executive Secretary recalled that GRETA's reports use three different verbs – "urge", "consider" and "invites" – which correspond to different levels of urgency of the recommendations for bringing the State Party's legislation and/or practice into compliance with the Convention. She noted that the draft recommendations were communicated to members of the Committee well in advance of each meeting, with a deadline for proposing possible amendments, which should be respected in order to prepare the discussion of the draft recommendations.

25. The Chair noted that the Committee of the Parties' role was to provide the necessary political impetus for the implementation of GRETA's conclusions, and the aim of the recommendations should be to ensure impact. By way of example, she referred to her own country where GRETA's report and the Committee of the Parties' recommendation had had a positive impact. The Chair further proposed that the Committee holds thematic debates on provisions of the Convention which pose challenges of implementation to several State Parties.

Agenda item 6: Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic (first evaluation round), Monaco (first/second evaluation round), and Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic (third evaluation round), and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties

26. The Chair recalled that since the last Committee of the Parties' meeting on 18 October 2019, GRETA had adopted final reports concerning the implementation of the Convention by the Czech Republic (first evaluation round), Monaco (first/second evaluation round), and Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic (third evaluation round). These reports had been sent to the respective national authorities for final comments and, following their receipt, had been made public. The five draft recommendations based on GRETA's reports had been made available to the Committee on 30 April 2020 and members of the Committee had been invited to send any proposals for amendments by 25 May 2020. The Chair noted that the Secretariat had not received any proposals for amendments to the draft recommendations.

27. The Chair recalled that the draft recommendations on the Czech Republic and Monaco 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.

6.1 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of the Czech Republic

28. Ambassador Emil Ruffer (the Czech Republic) noted that combatting human trafficking had been a long-term priority for the Czech Republic, referring to the efforts made by his country to ensure compliance of the Czech legislation with the Convention prior to its accession to the latter. He expressed his satisfaction that GRETA's report had confirmed compliance of Czech legislation with the Convention and had highlighted that the Czech authorities' efforts in the areas of training and awareness raising were going in the right direction. Further, he noted that the Czech authorities would take action on several issues identified by GRETA as areas for further action, for example the improvement of identification of victims or setting a better data collection system on trafficking in human beings. The full text of Ambassador Ruffer's statement appears in Appendix 6.

29. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of the Czech Republic and requested the Czech Government to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 12 June 2022.

6.2 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Monaco

30. Ambassador Rémi Mortier (Monaco) stressed his Government's commitment to take the necessary measures for the implementation, to the largest extent possible, of GRETA's conclusions. He indicated that following GRETA's report, his Government had set a working group composed of representatives of the relevant authorities in order to prepare a policy document in the areas of identification, protection and provision of assistance to victims of trafficking. Further, he noted that in 2019 the authorities of Monaco had carried out training and awareness-raising activities in respect of the relevant professionals and similar activities would be performed in the future.

31. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Monaco and requested the Monegasque Government to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 12 June 2022.

6.3 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Austria

32. The Chair noted that the draft recommendations concerning Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic were the first ones to be considered by the Committee under the third evaluation round, consisting of a preamble, a part welcoming positive developments observed, and a recommendation based on the issues for immediate action ("urges") identified in GRETA's reports. The recommendations requested the authorities to report on measures taken to address these urgent issues within two years of the adoption of recommendations by the Committee of the Parties.

33. Mr Andreas Bilgeri, Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria, expressed satisfaction with the excellent co-operation between GRETA and the Austrian authorities. He noted his Government's commitment to implement the measures proposed by GRETA, referring in particular to those concerning data collection and combating trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

34. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Austria and requested the Austria Government to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 12 June 2022.

6.4 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of Cyprus

35. Ms Tania Charalambidou, Administrative Officer in the Directorate of Migration, Asylum and European Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior of Cyprus, joined the meeting by conference call. She expressed her gratitude for the constructive dialogue with GRETA and underlined the importance of the thematic focus of the third evaluation round (access to justice and effective remedies for victims of trafficking in human beings). Further, she affirmed that human trafficking was addressed as a priority by the Cyprus Government, referring to examples of positive actions. Some measures to implement GRETA's proposals for action had already been taken, in particular training for prosecutors and judges, as well as legislative amendments. The full text of Ms Charalambidou's statement appears in Appendix 7.

36. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of Cyprus and requested the Cyprus Government to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 12 June 2022.

6.5 Draft recommendation to be adopted in respect of the Slovak Republic

37. Ms Miroslava Fialová, Expert in the Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, who attended by conference call, expressed her authorities; gratitude to GRETA for the constructive approach and conclusions. She noted that some of GRETA's proposals for action had already been incorporated in the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking for the years 2019-2023. The full text of Ms Fialová's statement appears in Appendix 8.

38. The Committee adopted the recommendation in respect of the Slovak Republic and requested the Slovak Government to inform it of measures taken to comply with this recommendation by 12 June 2022.

Agenda item 7: Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations

39. The Vice-Chair indicated that the Governments of Belarus, Greece, Azerbaijan, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine had submitted their replies to the Committee of the Parties' recommendations, and that these reports had been made available on the restricted website of the Committee. The authorities of San Marino had indicated that the newly installed government had been totally absorbed by the COVID-19 problems and therefore it was not possible to prepare a report. The authorities of Italy had sent their report on the day preceding the meeting.

40. The Vice-Chair invited the representatives of the countries in question to take the floor concerning their authorities' replies to the Committee of the Parties' recommendations.

First evaluation round

7.1 Belarus

41. Mr Alexander Grachev, Deputy Head of the Department for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of the Interior of Belarus, who joined the meeting by conference call, expressed his appreciation of the good co-operation with GRETA during the first evaluation round. He referred to efforts made by Belarus to tackle trafficking including legislative changes and setting up of a National Referral Mechanism in 2015. The full text of Mr Grachev's statement appears in Appendix 9.

7.2. Greece

42. Mr Georgios Skemperis, Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece, expressed his appreciation of the excellent co-operation with GRETA and the Committee of the Parties. He highlighted some elements from the report submitted by Greece, such as the adoption of the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking covering the period 2019-2023 and several important legislative amendments.

Second evaluation round

7.3 Azerbaijan

43. Mr Tale Aliyev, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan, expressed his appreciation of the co-operation between GRETA and Azerbaijanis authorities and informed the Committee of the forthcoming adoption of a new National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking for the period 2019-2023.

7.4 Iceland

44. Ms Hjördís Olga Guðbrandsdóttir, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Iceland, referred to the adoption of a new National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan in March 2019, which took into consideration GRETA's report and conclusions. Following its adoption, a steering group had been set up, involving municipalities, NGOs, trade unions and the Icelandic Red Cross. Further, progress was being made on setting up a National Referral Centre in 2020. The full text of Ms Guðbrandsdóttir's statement appears in Appendix 10.

7.5 Italy

45. Mr Stefano Pizzicannella, Director General of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Italy, who joined the meeting by conference call, presented his apologies for the late submission of Italy's report, which was due to the COVID-19 crisis. He referred to some of the information contained in the Italian authorities' report, in particular the preparation of a National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking for 2020-2022. This new plan would include as key priorities improving the reliability and availability of data on trafficking and the training of relevant professionals. In 2018, a new call for anti-trafficking projects had been issued, and a total of 21 projects had been selected for funding, starting on 1 March 2019, with an overall budget of 24 million euros. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the duration of the projects had been extended from the initial 15 months until 31 December 2020.

7.6 Luxembourg

46. No representative of Luxembourg was present at the meeting.

7.7 Netherlands

47. Ms Anouk Rooijers, Senior Policy Advisor on human trafficking in the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands, who joined the meeting by conference call, informed the Committee of the adoption of a new National Action Plan in 2018, which was one of the main recommendations of the second evaluation report of GRETA. She also referred to training provided to various professionals, plans to organise awareness-raising activities for school pupils, the setting up of a special team to monitor labour exploitation, and ongoing discussions on how to implement GRETA's recommendation on data collection while respecting data protection. The full text of Ms Rooijers' statement appears in Appendix 11.

7.8 San Marino

48. Ambassador Sylvie Bollini (San Marino) expressed her regret that the authorities of her country had not been in a position to submit their report due to serious problems caused by the COVID-19 infection. She also stated that due to the fall of the previous government and the ensuing early parliamentary election in December 2019, there was a delay in the adoption and implementation of many projects including those related to combatting human trafficking. Nevertheless, during the COVID-19 crisis, the authorities had set a hotline and a free telephone application for victims of violence. No cases of presumed victims of human trafficking have been detected.

7.9 Spain

49. Mr Alberto Anton Cortes, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Spain, who joined the meeting by conference call, informed the Committee that a strategic plan to combat trafficking in human beings is under preparation, as part of the National Action Plan against serious and organised crime. It aims to reinforce both prevention and suppression of trafficking in human beings, as well as the assistance and protection of victims of trafficking.

7.10 Sweden

50. Ms Charlotte Eklund Rimsten, Legal Adviser at the Ministry of Justice of Sweden, took the floor by conference call and referred to some of the elements contained in the Swedish authorities' report. In particular, she noted that the Swedish Government had appointed an inquiry to into whether the regulation on the recovery and reflection period should be changed, the results of which should be presented in June 2021. Further, the Prosecution Authorities had initiated an update of the guidelines for prosecutions on the non-punishment provision. The full text of Ms Rimsten's statement appears in Appendix 12.

7.11 Ukraine

51. Ms Yuliya Yakubovska, Expert in the Department of Social Services and Child Protection of the Ministry of Social Policy, who joined the meeting by conference call, expressed the appreciation of the Ukrainian Government of the constructive dialogue with GRETA and referred to some of the information contained in Ukraine's reports. A number of legislative changes had taken place or were in the pipeline, and a government hotline had been set up to receive calls from victims of trafficking and other forms of violence. The number of detected cases of human trafficking had significantly increased. Further, she noted that nearly 2 million people had been internally displaced, making them highly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, and the situation in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation raised serious concerns. The full text of Ms Yakubovska's statement appears in Appendix 13.

Agenda item 8: Follow-up to the Roadmap on strengthening action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation

52. The Chair recalled that the former Secretary General's report "[Ready for Future Challenges - Reinforcing the Council of Europe](#)" had identified trafficking for labour exploitation as one of the major challenges in Europe, referring to the findings of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). At the 129th Ministerial Session in Helsinki, the Committee of Ministers had instructed its Deputies to examine ways of strengthening action against trafficking in human beings ([CM/Del/Dec\(2019\)129/2a](#)). Subsequently, in November 2019, the new Council of Europe Secretary General had announced a roadmap on strengthening action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation.

53. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary to inform the Committee of the Parties on work carried out in relation to the roadmap for action against human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. The Executive Secretary referred to the activities of the *ad hoc* working group set up by GRETA in 2019, which had produced a draft compendium of good practices in the area of combating human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, and was working on a guidance note on this issue. The outcome could lay the groundwork for a Committee of Ministers recommendation. An exchange of views had taken place between GRETA and the European Committee of Social Rights, which had included questions on trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation in its questionnaire sent to State Parties in 2019. Further, the online HELP course was in the process of being updated with a new module on trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, as well as the course on labour rights being updated. The Council of Europe services dealing with procurement had held a first meeting, together with DLAPIL, to discuss how the procurement contracts can be amended. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greek Presidency's priorities had been adapted and it was no longer planned to organise an event on trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation in 2019.

Agenda item 9: Follow-up to Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2323 (2020) on concerted action against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants

54. The Chair recalled that on 30 January 2020, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had adopted Resolution 2323 (2020) on concerted action against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. Paragraphs 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of this Resolution referred to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and therefore PACE had asked for any feedback on follow-up the Committee of the Parties might wish to give to Resolution 2323 (2020). At its 1367th meeting (12-13 February 2020), the Committee of Ministers had communicated to GRETA for information and possible comments Parliamentary Assembly recommendation 2171 (2020) "Concerted action against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants".

55. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary to inform the Committee of GRETA's comments. The Executive Secretary recalled that the definition of trafficking in human beings in the Convention provides a minimum list of exploitative purposes, and national legislation may therefore target other forms of exploitation. GRETA's monitoring of the Convention had revealed that, in addition to the "at a minimum" list of forms of exploitation contained in the Convention, many State Parties had added to the criminalisation of trafficking in human beings the exploitation of begging and the exploitation of criminal activities. Some countries had included additional forms of exploitation, such as forced marriage, using a woman for reproductive purposes, removal of cells and tissues, illegal adoption, or using a person in armed conflicts. Several countries had adopted open-ended lists of exploitative purposes. In its reports, GRETA had stressed the importance of ensuring that all forms of exploitation related to human trafficking are adequately covered by law and practice. In this context, bearing in mind that trafficking in human beings was an evolving phenomenon, GRETA continued to pay attention to how State Parties address new trends and challenges. In its reports, GRETA had also emphasised that stating explicitly the irrelevance of the consent of a victim to the intended exploitation could improve the implementation of anti-trafficking provisions. After the first evaluation by GRETA, several State Parties had amended their criminal law provisions on human trafficking in order to state explicitly that the victim's consent to the intended or actual exploitation, where any means have been used, is irrelevant. As regards victims' access to compensation, the Executive Secretary noted that this was the subject of detailed examination by GRETA as part of the ongoing third round of evaluation of the Convention.

Agenda item 10: Follow-up to the round-table "Stepping up Council of Europe action against trafficking in human beings in the digital age" (Strasbourg, 17 December 2019)

56. The Chair recalled that on 17 December 2019, the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Division had organised a round-table meeting on "Stepping up the Council of Europe action against trafficking in human beings in the digital age", the report on which had been provided to the Committee of the Parties. The meeting had brought together some 60 participants, including staff from Permanent Representations of Council of Europe member States and observer States, law enforcement officials, business representatives and civil society, as well as of OSCE. Participants had discussed key challenges in identifying victims, investigating cases and prosecuting perpetrators of human trafficking offences committed with the use of information and communication technology (ICT), human rights challenges linked to the use of technology in tackling trafficking in human beings, and how governments and international organisations can strengthen collaboration with businesses and civil society.

57. The Executive Secretary informed the Committee of plans to commission a mapping study of the problems faced by State Parties to the Convention in relation to the detection, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking offences, the existing operational tools, and good practices in combating ICT-enabled human trafficking.

58. Mr Radoslav Kusenda, Deputy Permanent Representative to the Slovak Republic, noted that the round-table organised in December 2019 had been very topical and expressed support for the ongoing work in this area.

Agenda item 11: Information on anti-trafficking activities of other international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties

59. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary to present relevant information concerning activities by other international organisations or Council of Europe entities.

60. The Executive Secretary referred to the recent activities of the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), of which the Council of Europe is a partner. A lot of work had been carried out on raising awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on the fight against human trafficking, and a collection of statements and resources by ICAT member organisations was available. Further, ICAT had prepared issue briefs on the non-punishment principle and on trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. She also noted that the next OSCE Alliance Conference, dedicated to improving the prosecution of human trafficking and ending impunity, was planned to take place online on 20-22 July 2020.

61. The Executive Secretary also informed the Committee that the HELP online course of combating human trafficking had been launched in a number of countries (Czech Republic, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain).

Agenda item 12: State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

62. The Chair indicated that no new signatures and/or ratifications of the Convention had been submitted since the last meeting of the Committee of the Parties and consequently the number of Parties to the Convention continued to stand at 47. The Government of Israel has recently contacted the Secretariat inquiring about the procedure for acceding to the Convention, expressing an interest to accede to it.

63. The Chair stressed the importance of all Council of Europe member States joining the Convention and 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 13: Dates of future meetings

64. The Committee decided to hold its next meeting on either 4 or 11 December 2020. The date of the meeting should be confirmed in September 2020.

Agenda item 14: Other business

65. The Chair recalled that the Council of Europe traditionally organised activities to mark on 18 October, the European Anti-Trafficking Day, and that the Committee would be informed of plans in this respect.

66. In response to a question from Ambassador Roeland Böcker (Netherlands), the Chair indicated that the deadline for submitting candidatures for members of GRETA remained 11 September 2020.

67. Mr Michael Karagiorgis, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Cyprus, expressed his appreciation of the organisation of the hybrid meeting, which had enabled a number of experts to take part by conference call.

Agenda item 15: Adoption of the list of decisions taken

68. The Committee adopted the list of decisions taken and agreed to include in the agenda of its next meeting a discussion on how to facilitate the adoption of draft recommendations.

Appendix I

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Adoption of the draft agenda**
 - Draft agenda
- 3. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee of the Parties**
- 4. Exchange of views with the President of GRETA**
 - List of decisions taken by GRETA at its 36th meeting (18-22 November 2019)
- 5. Discussion on the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring process of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**
- 6. Examination of GRETA's reports on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic (first evaluation round), Monaco (first/second evaluation round), and Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic (third evaluation round), and adoption of recommendations in respect of these Parties**

First evaluation round

6.1 Czech Republic

- GRETA report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic
- Draft recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic

Combined first and second evaluation round

6.2 Monaco

- GRETA report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Monaco
- Draft recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Monaco

Third evaluation round

6.3 Austria

- GRETA report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Austria
- Draft recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Austria

6.4 Cyprus

- GRETA report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Cyprus
- Draft recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Cyprus

6.5 Slovak Republic

- GRETA report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Slovak Republic
- Draft recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Slovak Republic

7. Government reports submitted in reply to Committee of the Parties recommendations

First evaluation round

7.1 Belarus

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Belarus
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2017)26 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.2. Greece

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Greece
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)3 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

Second evaluation round

7.3 Azerbaijan

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Azerbaijan
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)24 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.4 Iceland

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Iceland
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP/Rec(2019)01 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.5 Italy

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Italy
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP/Rec(2019)02 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.6 Luxembourg

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Luxembourg
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)25 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.7 Netherlands

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Netherlands
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)26 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.8 San Marino

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by San Marino
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP/Rec(2019)03 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.9 Spain

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Spain
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)27 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.10 Sweden

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Sweden
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)28 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

7.11 Ukraine

- Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Ukraine
- Report submitted by the authorities on measures taken to comply with Committee of the Parties Recommendation CP(2018)29 on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

- 8. Follow-up to the Roadmap on strengthening action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation**
- 9. Follow-up to Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2323 (2020) on concerted action against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants**
- 10. Follow-up to the round-table "Stepping up Council of Europe action against trafficking in human beings in the digital age" (Strasbourg, 17 December 2019)**
- 11. Information on anti-trafficking activities of other international organisations of interest to the Committee of the Parties**
- 12. State of signatures and ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**
- 13. Dates of future meetings**

14. Other business**15. 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

Ms Sidita Gjipali
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

ANDORRA / ANDORRE

M. Joan Forner Rovira
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentant Permanent
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

ARMENIA / ARMÉNIE

Ms Astghik Baldryan
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

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

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN

Mr Tale Aliyev
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

BELARUS/ BÉLARUS

Mr Nikita Belenchenko
Representative of Belarus
to the Council of Europe

Mr Dmitriy Tsayun – *by videoconference*
Deputy Head of the Chief Department for Drug
Control and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
Head of the Department for Combating Trafficking in
Human Beings
Ministry of the Interior

Mr Alexander Grachev – *by videoconference*
Deputy Head of the Department for Combating
Trafficking in Human Beings
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ms Diana Ilyashevich – *by videoconference*
Senior Inspector
International Law Unit
International Co-operation Department
Ministry of the Interior

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

M. Gilles Heyvaert
Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire
Représentant Permanent de la Belgique

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA/BOSNIE- HERZEGOVINE

Ms Dragana Kremenovic Kusmuk – *by videoconference*
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

Ms Boyana Trifonova
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Maria Dimitrova – *by videoconference*
Chief expert
National Commission for Combating Trafficking in
Human Beings

CROATIA / CROATIE

Ms Blaženka Pavliček Budimir
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

CYPRUS / CHYPRE

Mr Michael Karagiorgis
Deputy Permanent Representative
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Mrs Tania Charalambidou – *by videoconference*
Administrative Officer, Directorate of Migration,
Asylum and European Affairs
Ministry of the Interior

CZECH REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

Mr Emil Ruffer
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

Mr Ondřej Abrham – *by videoconference*
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Marta Pelechová – *by videoconference*
International dossiers Co-ordinator
Ministry of Justice

DENMARK / DANEMARK

Ms Hélène Fester
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

ESTONIA / ESTONIE

Ms Kerli Tiik
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

FINLAND / FINLANDE

Ms Mia Spolander
Deputy to the Permanent Representative

Ms Satu Sistonen – *by videoconference*
Legal Counsellor
Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions
Legal Service
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

FRANCE

M. Maxime Huot
Adjoint au Représentant Permanent

Mme Anne-Charlotte Roche – *par visioconférence*
Conseillère technique
Mission interministérielle pour la protection des
femmes contre les violences et la lutte contre la
traite des êtres humains

GEORGIA / GÉORGIE

Ms Sophie Japaridze
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Ms Iris Muth – *by videoconference*
Head of Division
Division 402 – Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
and Prostitute Protection Act
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs,
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Ms Dagmara Turczynska – *by videoconference*
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs,
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

GREECE / GRECE

M. Georgios SKEMPERIS
Adjoint au Représentant Permanent

HUNGARY / HONGRIE

Mr Gergő Kocsis
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Áron Tési – *by videoconference*
Department of European Cooperation
Ministry of Interior

ICELAND / ISLANDE

Ms Hjördís Olga Guðbrandsdóttir
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Svala Ísfeld Ólafsdóttir – *by videoconference*
Senior expert
Ministry of Justice

IRELAND / IRLANDE

Ms Aoife Fleming
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Eileen Leahy – *by videoconference*
Principal Officer
Economic, Transnational and Organised Crime Policy
SMR and Applied Policy
Criminal Justice
Department of Justice and Equality

ITALY / ITALIE

M. Daniele LOI
Adjoint au Représentant Permanent

Ms Laura Menicucci – *by videoconference*
Co-ordinator of the Office on International Affairs
and Intervention in the Social Field
Department for Equal Opportunities
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Mr Stefano Pizzicannella – *by videoconference*
Director General
Department for Equal Opportunities
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Ms Annaclaudia Servillo – *by videoconference*
Director
Department for Equal Opportunities
Presidency of the Council of Ministers

LATVIA / LETTONIE

Mr Dāvis Baiža
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

LIECHTENSTEIN

LITHUANIA / LITUANIE

Ms Monika Bimbaitė
Deputy to the Permanent Representative

LUXEMBOURG

MALTA / MALTE

Ms Emilija Deolska
Trainee
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA / REPUBLICQUE DE MOLDOVA

Ms Corina Călugăru
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Andrei Ursu
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

MONACO

M. Rémi Mortier
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentant Permanent auprès du Conseil de
l'Europe

Mme Mariam Tavassoli Zea – *par visioconférence*
Adjointe au Représentant Permanent

Mme Corinne Magail – *par visioconférence*
Chargé de Mission
Département des Relations Extérieures et de la
Coopération

MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO

Ms Radusinovic Ana
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

NETHERLANDS / PAYS BAS

Mr Roeland Böcker
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Anouk Rooijers – *by videoconference*
Senior policy advisor Human Trafficking
Ministry of Justice and Security
Directorate General for Justice and Law Enforcement
Department of Organised Crime

NORTH MACEDONIA / MACÉDOINE DU NORD

Mr Zoran Barbutov
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

NORWAY / NORVÈGE

Mr Birger Gjelsten Veum
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
of the Council of Europe

Mr Jan Austad – *by videoconference*
Ministry of Justice and Public Security

POLAND / POLOGNE

Mr Janusz Stańczyk
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Cecylia Bernacka – *by videoconference*
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

PORTUGAL

Mme Marta Saraiva
Représentante Permanente Adjointe
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

Mr Alexandru Atanasiu
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Ana Maria Tamaş-Ilinca – *by videoconference*
Officer
Romanian National Agency against Trafficking in
Human Beings
Monitoring, Evaluation and Coordination Service

SAN MARINO / SAINT-MARIN

Mme Sylvie Bollini
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Représentante Permanente
auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

SERBIA / SERBIE

Mr Darko Ninkov
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

SLOVAK REPUBLIC / RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE

Mr Radoslav Kusenda
Deputy Permanent Representative to the Council of
Europe

Ms Miroslava Fialová – *by videoconference*
Representative of the National Rapporteur
Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in
Human Beings and Crime Prevention
Ministry of the Interior

SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE

Mr Helmut Hartman
Legal Adviser
Permanent Representation
to the Council of Europe

SPAIN / ESPAGNE

Mr Alberto Anton Cortes – *by videoconference*
Deputy Permanent Representative

SWEDEN / SUÈDE

Ms Caroline Persson
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Charlotte Eklund Rimsten – *by videoconference*
Legal Adviser
Ministry of Justice
Division for Criminal Law

SWITZERLAND / SUISSE

Mr Christian Meuwly
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Anne Begemann
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

TURKEY / TURQUIE

Ms Çiğdem Şaylıman
Deputy to the Permanent Representative

UKRAINE

Mr Valentyn Skuratovskyy – *by videoconference*
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Mr Serhii Shablîi – *by videoconference*
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Ms Kseniya Samonina – *by videoconference*
Senior Specialist
Directorate for the Implementation of European
Standards of Equality
Ministry of Social Policy

Ms Yuliya Yakubovska – *by videoconference*
State expert for the Group of Experts on Action against
Trafficking in Human Beings
Domestic Violence and Development of Gender Equality
Department of Social Services and Child Protection
Ministry of Social Policy

UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME UNI

Mr Mark Gorey
Deputy to the Permanent Representative
to the Council of Europe

Participants of the Committee of the Parties Participants du Comité des Parties

Signatory States / États signataires

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 CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Ms Penelope Denu – *by videoconference*
Head of the Secretariat
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced
Persons

Mr Rüdiger Dossow – *by videoconference*
Committee Secretary
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced
Persons

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONGRÈS DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET RÉGIONAUX DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS / COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Ms Dunja Mijatović
(apologised/excusée)

CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONFÉRENCE DES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES NON- GOUVERNEMENTALES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Ms Marie Salphati – *by videoconference*
Representative of the Conference of INGOs
of the Council of Europe

International Intergovernmental Organisations / Organisations intergouvernementales internationales

EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE

Mr Angelos Angelou – *by videoconference*
Political Officer
EU Delegation to the Council of Europe

Observers of the Committee of the Parties Observateurs du Comité des Parties

Others / Autres

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

Mr Davor Derenčinović – *by videoconference*
President of GRETA

Secretariat / Secrétariat

**Directorate General of Democracy /
Direction générale de la Démocratie**

**Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA
and Committee of the Parties) /
Secrétariat de la Convention du Conseil de l'Europe sur la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains
(GRETA et Comité des Parties)**

Ms Petya Nestorova
Executive Secretary

Mr Alexander Bartling
Administrator – Co-operation Activities

Mr Mesut Bedirhanoglu
Administrator

Ms Evgenia Giakoumopoulou
Adminstrator

Ms Susie Morgan
Principal Administrative Assistant

Ms Jackie Renaudin-Siddall
Administrative Assistant

Ms Giorgia Spada
Administrative Assistant

Interpreters / Interprètes

M. Rémy Jain

M. Didier Jungling

M. Derrick Worsdale

Appendix III

Statement by Mr Davor Derenčinović, President of GRETA

Ms Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The **COVID-19** outbreak has drastically affected our lives and societies. While dealing with health and sanitary issues has been a priority, there are growing concerns about the short and long-term impact of the pandemic. In a statement issued on 3 April, GRETA drew attention to the particular difficulties experienced by victims of human trafficking, who generally find themselves in a position of great insecurity and vulnerability, and whose situation can only deteriorate as a result of the measures taken to control the pandemic and its socio-economic impacts. In addition to having suffered incapacitating psychological trauma and physical injuries, many of these women, men and children have no means of subsistence and may be in an irregular migration or employment situation, without medical or social protection, and with no documents and resources to enable them to return to their home countries. Frontline civil society organisations providing accommodation, support and redress to victims of trafficking have issued alerts about delays in identification of victims and hindered access to healthcare and shelters, putting victims at risk of continued exploitation and homelessness. Many NGOs have reduced their office presence and even though they strive to continue offering legal and other support online or by phone, the services provided by them have been partly suspended and there are increasing concerns about the availability of funding. Law enforcement agencies have reported increased prevalence of sexual exploitation online and use of technology to facilitate criminal conduct. At the same time, diverted law enforcement resources and reduced inspections lead to a decrease in identification of human trafficking cases. Delayed access to justice, including postponement of trials, has caused disturbances in the conduct of proceedings before criminal, civil and administrative courts to the detriment of victims' rights. There are also risks that the return of victims of trafficking to their countries of origin may be delayed or, on the contrary, precipitated, even if the persons concerned face serious health and protection risks in the countries of return.

It is in such times that GRETA must remind leaders of state parties of the legal and moral obligation not to cut corners on the rights and protection of the most vulnerable, which include victims of human trafficking. We must make sure that the thousands of women, men and children who are victims of trafficking in human beings, while being out of sight, do not slip out of our minds.

Since early March, GRETA has had to **adapt its activities**. GRETA's Bureau has held regular online meetings and consultations in order to ensure a continuation of the work. The plenary meeting in March could not take place, but GRETA nevertheless adopted three final reports by written procedure. These reports, concerning **Austria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic**, were subsequently transmitted to the national authorities for final comments and were made public. The three reports in question are the first ones to be adopted by GRETA as part of the third round of evaluation of the Anti-Trafficking Convention, which has a thematic focus on access to justice and effective remedies for victims of human trafficking. These reports are the subject of draft recommendations that you will discuss and adopt today, together with the draft recommendations on the **Czech Republic and Monaco**, which were evaluated by GRETA for the first time in 2019.

On 3 April 2020, GRETA published the **9th General report** on its activities, covering the calendar year 2019. According to the report, the number of presumed and identified victims of trafficking in the 47 State Parties to the Convention rose by 44% between 2015 and 2018. Different countries count victims of trafficking in different ways, but the available data suggests there has been a considerable increase in the number of people identified as victims of trafficking. The hidden nature of human trafficking and the fact that we have found problems with the identification process in many countries suggest that the real

number of victims may actually be much higher. It is crucial that the relevant authorities step up their efforts to tackle human trafficking and provide the assistance that victims are legally entitled to.

GRETA's 9th General report takes stock of the implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Convention, on the basis of the second evaluation round reports drawn up by GRETA. The Convention's provisions monitored by GRETA in the course of the second evaluation round have been translated into 34 indicators and GRETA's recommendations related to these indicators have been reflected in a table, which provides an overview of the implementation of the Convention. The purpose of the analysis is to highlight the areas where compliance with the obligations of the Convention requires improvement across State Parties.

Let me highlight some of the main conclusions from this stocktaking. In the course of the second evaluation round, GRETA paid particular attention to measures taken to address the vulnerability of children to trafficking. The stocktaking shows that the great majority of State Parties continue to have important gaps in the identification of, and assistance to, child victims of trafficking. In general, GRETA's evaluation reports reveal a shortage of suitable accommodation for these children. Another frequent concern is the significant number of unaccompanied migrant children disappearing from local authority care.

There are also serious shortcomings regarding the assistance provided to adult victims of trafficking. Most assistance services, including shelters, are designed and tailored to the needs of female victims, in particular those subjected to sexual exploitation. The number of male victims of trafficking has been on the rise, but there is still a marked shortage of assistance projects for male victims of trafficking.

Other gaps identified in the stocktaking concern the application of the recovery and reflection period, access to compensation and legal aid, as well as compliance with the non-punishment provision. There is nevertheless some improvement in the implementation of these provisions compared to the first evaluation round, during which the proportion of countries where GRETA found gaps was higher. This is a sign of State Parties improving their legislative and institutional frameworks, policies and practices, in the light of GRETA's recommendations.

The stocktaking also shows that the punishment of traffickers remains unsatisfactory. While all State Parties to the Convention have criminalised human trafficking, not all forms of exploitation are adequately covered in practice. The number of prosecutions and convictions for human trafficking offences is still low in many State Parties, and the sentences imposed are sometimes not sufficiently dissuasive. Further, the confiscation of traffickers' assets remains all too rare. GRETA stresses that failure to convict traffickers and the absence of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions undermines efforts to combat human trafficking and guarantee victims' access to justice.

On the positive side, there has also been an increase in the number of countries which criminalise the use of services of victims of trafficking by people who know that they have been trafficked.

Turning to GRETA's programme of activities, GRETA managed to carry out two evaluation visits, to **Montenegro** and **Romania**, in early March 2020. The four GRETA visits which were supposed to take place in the second quarter of 2020 (**Armenia, Latvia, Malta** and **United Kingdom**) have been postponed to the autumn. This means that GRETA's calendar of visits will be revised and some of the 11 visits planned to take place in 2020 will be postponed to 2021. GRETA has sent the third round questionnaire to **France, Norway** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, and the second round questionnaire to **Belarus**, and is expecting their replies in September.

The ad hoc working group set up by GRETA last year has prepared a draft compendium of good practices in the area of **combating human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation**, on the basis of GRETA's country evaluation reports, which will be approved by GRETA at its forthcoming plenary meeting in early July.

GRETA is also planning to follow up on the **round-table "Stepping up the Council of Europe action against trafficking in human beings in the digital age"**, which was organised on 17 December 2019 in Strasbourg.

Further, GRETA has finalised the preparation of a **guidance note aimed at strengthening the implementation of the obligation to provide international protection** to victims of trafficking, as well as persons at risk of being trafficked, which will be published on the occasion of World Refugee Day, 20 June.

There have been a number of **staff changes in the Secretariat** of the Convention, and some of the administrators' posts remain to be filled. **This** has inevitably an impact on our activities.

At the same time, the number of **co-operation projects** based on GRETA's reports and the Committee of the Parties' recommendations is growing and new staff is recruited in the field offices to implement activities.

I trust that the Committee of the Parties will continue reinforcing GRETA's monitoring findings through its work and support to States Parties in improving the implementation of the Convention.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix IV

Statement by Mr Janusz Stańczyk, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Poland

In this discussion we should interpret the role of the Committee of the Parties in the monitoring process, in line with the language of the Warsaw Convention CETS 197, which is clear on the issue of the roles of GRETA and CoP (art. 38.6 and 38.7 respectively).

In particular, it is the CoP which may adopt "recommendations" addressed to a state party concerning the implementation of the Convention. We shall avoid however to use the same term "recommendations" to the outcomes of GRETA's work – which are "conclusions" in any country report. On the basis of these conclusions, the CoP may prescribe implementation of specific recommendations to a state party.

There is therefore a small margin for manoeuvre for the CoP, between the "rubber stamping" of GRETA conclusions into CoP recommendations, or diverting from the conclusions. The aim is to implement the GRETA conclusions as/ because they form the basis for recommendations.

Appendix V

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

Madam Chair,

Let me first congratulate you on your re-election as our Chair, and the distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland on his election as our Vice-Chair.

Thank you for including this item on the agenda of our today's meeting.

Committee of the Parties, together with GRETA, was established by the anti-trafficking Convention. Both have their roles, well mentioned in the Convention, and particularly in its Chapter VII, which makes our Committee as an integral part of the monitoring mechanism.

So, we believe this Committee has a role to play, including by adopting its own texts based on the process of implementation of the Convention by a participating country, and in that context it should rely on the conclusions and recommendations of GRETA in order to ensure the effectiveness of the monitoring process.

Thank you.

Appendix VI

Statement by Mr Emil Ruffer, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to the Czech Republic

Thank you, Madam Chair,

First of all, let me express my appreciation to you and the Secretariat for convening this meeting despite the challenging circumstances, and for having worked hard during the past difficult months.

It is my pleasure to briefly address you on behalf of the Czech Republic at the occasion of the examination of the GRETA's report on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic as a part of the first evaluation round.

The fight against trafficking in human beings has been a long-term priority for the Czech Republic, which is one of the reasons why it has acceded the Convention, becoming effective for the Czech Republic as of 1st July 2017. It may seem that the Czech Republic waited quite a long time before the ratification. However, we just wanted to make sure that our legislation was fully in line with the Convention before our accession.

We are therefore glad that the GRETA country visit to the Czech Republic, which took place in March 2019, and the consequent report confirmed that our legislation is basically compliant with the Convention and that our trainings and awareness raising campaigns are going in the right direction.

But this is no time for complacency. We are aware of several issues GRETA has identified as areas where further action would be necessary, for example the improvement of identification of victims or setting a better data collection system on trafficking in human beings.

The Czech Republic will now concentrate on all recommendations formulated by GRETA and will be pleased to report on measures taken to comply with them within the two-year deadline.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix VII

Statement by Ms Tania Charalambidou, Administrative Officer in the Directorate of Migration, Asylum and European Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior of Cyprus

Thank you very much for the opportunity that is given to us to state our comments on the Draft Recommendation.

We would also like to thank the members of GRETA for the excellent cooperation we had during the exchanges in the framework of the 3rd evaluation round, not to mention the very constructive meetings we had face-to-face in Cyprus.

The focus of the 3rd evaluation round on the victims' access to justice and effective remedies, which is essential for victims' rehabilitation and reinstatement of rights, and reflects a victim-centred and human-rights based approach to the fight against human trafficking, is indeed very important, as it hasn't been dealt with equal attention the last years, for we tend to focus more on prevention and prosecution. This insight has been a driving engine for the authorities to start taking measures towards this direction.

The Cyprus' government has raised the issue of addressing human trafficking as a priority and has made tremendous progress during the past years. This is indeed reflected in the large number of positive actions that have been acknowledged by GRETA and are stated in their report.

The National Coordinator works in full cooperation with the competent authorities, both in the day-to-day work and in the framework of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group, for monitoring the implementation of the Law and the National Referral Mechanism, and strives to find solutions in emerging issues. Towards achieving better cooperation, especially with NGOs that participate in the MCG, an ad hoc group on victim support and protection has been established in the MCG framework.

Having examined very carefully the recommendations drafted by GRETA, as well as the Draft Recommendation that is examined today, we adopt the recommendations and will work towards fulfilling them.

Let me refer to a couple of steps that have already been taken:

- a) To improve the procedure of prosecutions and the issuing of more decisions for convictions, we have promoted training and specialisation of prosecutors and judges to deal with THB cases. We also plan to organize further training to prosecutors and the judiciary, to deal with compensation, in line with recommendation 2 of the Committee of the Parties.
- b) As regards the recommendation on returning property to the victim, which is seized in criminal proceedings, please be informed that the Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Money Laundering, will be further amended to provide that any monetary sums or property that is confiscated, will be returned to the victims of the criminal offences related to the Confiscation Order (and not to the budget of the Ministry of Finance).
- c) With reference to recommendation 5, to provide the recovery and reflection period as soon as there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person is a victim of THB, this is already put in practice, in order to conform with the European Directive and the Convention, and the respective provision will soon be amended in the Law.

With the above been said, we thank you once more.

Appendix VIII

Statement by Ms Miroslava Fialová, Representative of the National Rapporteur of the Slovak Republic, Information Centre for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Crime Prevention, Ministry of the Interior

Dear Mrs. Executive Secretary, dear chair of the Committee of the Parties, Ambassadors and experts,

On behalf of Slovak authorities, allow me to express our gratitude to the Council of Europe, GRETA President Mr. Davor Derencinović, Greta member Mr. Mihai Șerban and administrators of the Secretariat Mrs. Natacha de Roeck and Mr. Mats Lindberg for their constructive approach, their time, efforts and proposed recommendations in the third evaluation round on the implementation of the Convention by the Slovak Republic.

From the position of the Slovak national rapporteur, let me assure you that we will pay serious attention at the national level in order to address GRETA recommendations. We are aware of shortcomings and challenges but on the other hand we have achieved some progress, too. We have already focused on problematic issues and have incorporated respective tasks into the actual National Action Plan of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the years 2019 – 2023 which is the fifth adopted national action plan in the Slovak Republic.

Still, as we have mechanisms for dealing with challenges for anti-trafficking issues in the Slovak Republic, through partnership and coordination of stakeholders including NGOs we will strive to do our best to improve the system of combating trafficking in human beings in Slovakia in line with the Convention as we perceive it our common goal.

Appendix IX

Statement by Mr Mr Alexander Grachev, Deputy Head of the Department for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus

The problem of human trafficking, which is the burning issue for the whole world community, also remains extremely urgent for Belarus. Belarus has not only ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo Protocol supplementing it in 2003, has joined the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in 2013, Belarus is also a party to all the UN universal conventions in the field of combating human trafficking and related crimes.

Measures to combat human trafficking in Belarus are complex and built into a clear system, including the improvement of legislation; activities of state authorities, international organizations, NGOs and their coordination; personnel training; the international cooperation; statistics and reporting available on the Internet.

After the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings entered into force for Belarus in 2014, a great deal of work was done to implement international legal norms into national legislation.

From 2005 to 2015 a number of improving amendments were introduced to the Criminal Code and the Law on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. In addition to trafficking in human beings, six more *corpus delicti* have been criminalized, covering all types and forms of "modern slavery". National definitions of human trafficking and exploitation, other related concepts have been developed taking into account international norms and experience.

In accordance with the Government Decree No. 485 the National Identification and Referral Mechanism for human trafficking victims was developed in 2015 and has been successfully implemented from that date.

A 30-day reflection period has been legislatively introduced, it's the period during which the victim can be rehabilitated and make an informed decision on cooperation with the law enforcement agencies. Rehabilitation of such a person is carried out regardless of his participation in the criminal process. Nowadays two categories of people have the right to receive rehabilitation assistance: 1) victims of human trafficking and 2) persons who may have suffered from human trafficking or related crimes.

The functions of the National Rapporteur in the field of combating human trafficking are assigned to the Minister of the Internal Affairs. The coordination of the identification and disclosure of related crimes is carried out within the framework of the Coordination Meeting under the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus. Coordination while the identification, protection and rehabilitation of human trafficking victims, including abroad, is entrusted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Within the international cooperation framework international forums are organized annually and the representatives of foreign countries who are experts in the field of combating human trafficking are invited to participate in. Cooperation with the UN and its structural units, IOM, OSCE and other international organizations is established.

GRETA recommendations for Belarus to continue its efforts in various areas of combating human trafficking and its consequences are implemented within the framework of the regular activities of the state bodies involved, state and public organizations within their competence.

Thank you for your attention!

Appendix X

Statement by Ms Hjördís Olga Guðbrandsdóttir, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Iceland

Since the second evaluation of GRETA, the Icelandic Government has worked diligently to respond to the shortcomings and demands for improvements presented in GRETA's report from 2019 and in the Recommendations adopted by the Committee of the Parties on the 5th April last year.

On the 15th of May this year, the Icelandic government submitted its report on measures taken to comply with the Committee of the Parties' Recommendations. I will not go into much details of the report, which is accessible to all delegations, but I will give a short overview of the main developments.

On the 29th of March 2019, The Ministry of Justice issued a new and updated National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan. The Plan includes numerous types of actions to further increase awareness among the general public, provide education and awareness for workers, and increase institutional knowledge on how to better understand and identify the nature of human trafficking. These actions are to be implemented as means to combat human trafficking and labour exploitation, and include the revision of current legislation, regulations and administrative directives on how to identify the victims of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation. The actions are furthermore designed to provide assistance and protection to victims, guidelines on how to identify instances when children are believed to be the victims of human trafficking as well as measures to provide proper protection for them.

The Action Plan is based on and gives consideration to GRETA's report on Iceland.

Since the publication of the Action Plan, work has been focused on systematically introducing and implementing it. A steering group has been established consisting of parties responsible for the work on implementation and introduction of actions under the plan, and other stakeholders, including municipalities, NGOs, labour unions and the Red Cross.

Under the steering committee, three task forces have been established, having the role of implementing the parts of the Action plan which concern preventive measures; investigation and prosecution; and the third one oversees measures of assistance, support and protection.

GRETA's Recommendations recommend the setting up of a National Referral Mechanism. Iceland's National Action Plan proposes the opening up of a National Referral Centre in 2020 and the work is already under way. The Centre is designed to co-ordinate procedures and responses when suspicion of human trafficking arises and subsequently activate the relevant actor for each case. It will further have a role in prevention programs, education, and awareness campaigns for the general public.

To conclude, Iceland remains dedicated to the cause and the fight against trafficking in human beings and we are determined to make further progress, using GRETA's recommendations on our way forward.

Thank you.

Appendix XI

Statement by Ms Anouk Rooijers, Senior Policy Advisor on human trafficking in the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands

Text with regards to agenda item 7.7:

- The Netherlands would like to thank GRETA for its second report on the implementation of the Trafficking in Human Beings Convention in the Netherlands
- In November 2019 we have handed in our written explanation in response to the three immediate recommendations of Greta and I refer to them for the most part.
- The main recommendation that Greta had, was to install a National Action Plan. In November 2018 we have launched the so-called programme 'Together against Human Trafficking. This programme has been developed by the ministries of Justice and Security, Health Welfare and Sports, Social Affairs and employment and Foreign Affairs, together with a wide range of stakeholders in the field of combatting human trafficking (police, public prosecution, municipalities, NGO's, social workers etc.).

A lot of these partners are also responsible for the implementation of parts of the programme. The programme aims to tackle various forms of human trafficking; sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and criminal exploitation. With this programme we pursue an integrated approach to the problem: prevention, identification, detection, shelter and tackling it on an international level are considered in conjunction. The programme is built up along 5 lines of action:

1. *Further development of the basic approach to tackling human trafficking:* Central to this Action Line is the further improvement of the detection of victims, the detection of perpetrators and the improvement of the care services for victims of human trafficking.
2. *Further development of the approach to tackling labour exploitation:* The Netherlands has committed itself to the recently ratified ILO protocol on forced labour.¹¹ This Action Line looks at the way in which we, in consultation with the social partners, want to strengthen the approach to tackling labour exploitation.
3. *Victim and perpetrator prevention:* preventing people from becoming victims in the Netherlands and in countries of origin and transit, is one of the central objectives of this programme. We also consider how we can prevent crimes from being perpetrated, for example by making agreements with the business community.
4. *Strengthening the municipal approach to tackling human trafficking:* An integrated approach to human trafficking requires made-to-measure solutions and therefore good cooperation between all chain partners at the local level. Municipalities have an important role to play here. They are responsible for the administrative aspect of tackling the problem and for organising adequate support and shelter for victims. But municipalities are also indispensable as catalysts of the local approach to fighting human trafficking.
5. *Sharing knowledge and information:* In order to be able to tackle human trafficking adequately, it is necessary to know the nature and scope of the problem. In this Action Line we also consider the need for effective sharing of knowledge and information between the professionals involved, both within the Netherlands and across the border.

-
- Since November 2018 a lot has happened. Since the programme entails so many participants and areas it has also provided for good results. Some concrete examples:
 - We have created 36 more places for victims with multi problems. So not only being a victim of human trafficking but also for example a drug addict
 - We have placed more liaison officers with the specific THB task in resource and transit countries
 - We are looking into the issue of working more together in exchanging data between the various organisations in the field
 - More training of professionals has taken place.
 - At this moment and as a result of the Covid19 situation we are monitoring more what is happening in the field. Also a special team that monitors labour exploitation has come into force.

We are aware that more has to be done, but are working on that everyday with our many partners.

Appendix XII

Statement by Ms Charlotte Eklund Rimsten, Legal Adviser at the 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. The second evaluation round and the recommendations have truly 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.

GRETA's report and its proposals are valuable for the work ahead. Sweden intends to keep the Council of Europe informed on future developments. At this point however, I would like to mention just a couple of recent developments of relevance that are not included in Sweden's answer to GRETA's recommendations.

On the 30th of April, the Swedish Government appointed an inquiry to investigate, among other things, if the regulation concerning the recovery and reflection period for victims of trafficking in human beings needs to be changed. The inquiry will consider whether additional authorities should be able to apply for this particular kind of residence permit. The results of the inquiry are to be presented in June 2021.

The Swedish Government is currently processing an application for funding from the Platform Swedish Civil Society against Human Trafficking for the National Support Programme (NSP) for victims of trafficking. The support programme is a complement to the responsibilities of the Swedish authorities and municipalities to provide assistance to victims.: The Government is further assessing the possibilities for a long-term solution regarding the funding of the activities of the Platform.

In order to strengthen efforts to ensure that victims of THB are not punished for offences they have been compelled to commit, in compliance with the non-punishment clause contained in Article 26 of the Convention, the Swedish Prosecution Authority initiated an update of their guidelines on the matter. Hopefully, this will lead to fewer prosecutions regarding minor offences by victims of THB.

Thank you for your attention.

Appendix XIII

Statement by Ms Yuliya Yakubovska, Expert in the Department of Social Services and Child Protection of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine

First of all, on behalf of the Ukrainian government, our delegation would like to thank the Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the GRETA Expert Group for their long-term cooperation and constructive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention.

The Government of Ukraine expresses its sincere gratitude for the appreciation of the efforts of our state to improve the situation in the fight against human trafficking.

Ukraine will continue to improve its legislation and implementation measures in line with the challenges in this area.

Since the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Combating Trafficking in Human Beings", the relevant work has been carried out to strengthen state control in this area.

In order to improve the legislation in terms of the procedure for establishing the status of a victim of trafficking in human beings and expanding the list of services, that a person, who applied for the status of a victim of trafficking in human beings and a person who has such a status can receive free of charge, the draft Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Concerning the Improvement of the Procedure for Establishing the Status of a Victim of Trafficking in Human Beings" was drafted;

- work on drafting a new State Social Program to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2021-2025, taking into account the GRETA recommendations has been launched;
- the conditions for conducting business activities for the provision of employment mediation services abroad were improved, the protection of the rights of persons employed abroad was increased and the responsibility of licensees was strengthened by adopting a relevant Government resolution;
- the legislation aimed at protecting the rights of children, who are the most vulnerable category was improved;
- the Unified Register of Persons Convicted of Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Sexual Inviolability of a Juvenile has been introduced and the responsibility for such crimes has been strengthened;
- The Government Hotline (15-47) has been set up to receive appeals and reports about / or victims of trafficking, domestic violence, gender-based violence, violence against children, or the threat of such violence.

We understand that we can minimize the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings only through consolidation of efforts at inter-agency level, through enhancing of international cooperation and implementation of best practices.

The Ministry of Social Policy, as the national coordinator, organizes training for representatives of the agencies, that carry out measures in the field of combating trafficking in human beings.

As a result, the number of detected criminal offenses under Article 149 (Trafficking in Human Beings) has significantly increased.

During 2012-2019 the Ministry of Social Policy was monitoring the dynamics of increasing the number of persons who have been identified as victims of human trafficking.

During 2019, victims of human trafficking were provided with social services, including psychological, legal, social, humanitarian assistance, employment assistance, realization of the right to education, vocational training, improvement of living conditions, restoration of documents, temporary services.

Ukrainian program of educational activities to prevent human trafficking "Personal Dignity. Life safety. Civic position" is being implemented and covered most educational institutions of Ukraine.

In order to implement the best European standards in combating trafficking in human beings, informational and educational campaign to raise the awareness was held throughout Ukraine in cooperation with the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine, IOM Office in Ukraine, A21 International Non-Governmental Organization and All-Ukrainian Coalition of Anti-Trafficking NGOs and of course the Council of Europe.

Dear colleagues!

Unfortunately, the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against our state has provoked waves of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine.

Nearly two million people were displaced, and these Ukrainian citizens are especially vulnerable to hardships. In areas controlled by the Russia-backed forces, the situation has become particularly challenging. Employment options are limited and the occupying power has restricted international humanitarian aid that would help meeting civilian needs.

Ukraine is presently unable to influence the situation with human trafficking in the temporarily occupied territories.

At the same time, we can state positive tendency in this issue on the rest of the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

The practice of distributing Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine also created new challenges to our common struggle and complicated the control against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Let me take this opportunity to thank once again the Secretariat of the Council of Europe and the GRETA Expert Group for the many years of fruitful cooperation and constructive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention.

Thank you for your attention!