



Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the OSCE Region

The Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings raises public awareness of all forms of human trafficking and helps build the political will to combat the problem. It assists participating States, at their request, in fulfilling OSCE commitments and recommendations. Furthermore, the Office co-ordinates anti-trafficking efforts within the OSCE and cooperates with international organizations as well as with relevant actors from civil society.

BACKGROUND– Combating modern-day slavery

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most demanding and complex security issues in the OSCE region. Every year, hundreds of thousands of women, children and men are trafficked to, through or from OSCE participating States for the purpose of exploitation.

Often promised a well-paid job away from their communities, these modern-day slaves find themselves living in hell, unable to escape. Forced into prostitution, tied to sewing machines, coerced into working unending shifts in the fields or into begging on the streets - trafficking is a cruel crime that turns people into commodities.

Trafficking in human beings still remains greatly misunderstood and as a result is insufficiently addressed both in policy and practice. Trafficking entails violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, undermines the rule of law, endangers economic stability, thrives on corruption and imposes a real threat to the lives and wellbeing of citizens. Trafficking cuts across all dimensions of the OSCE's work and therefore requires a multi-faceted approach.

Although human trafficking has been on the international political and human rights agenda since 2000, there is still a lot of work to be done in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution. The number of arrests, prosecutions and convictions of traffickers remains low, while the number of victims continues to increase.

“Human trafficking is a serious crime that violates human dignity and poses a threat to human security in our societies. The OSCE, on the basis of its comprehensive and multidimensional approach to security, its unique geographical representation and the substantial framework of its political commitments, plays an important role in combating trafficking in human beings.” Eva Biaudet, Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

The OSCE has long played an active role in addressing human trafficking, which is both a severe human rights violation as well as a crime. This engagement is reflected in the organization’s numerous political commitments. These commitments, affirming the primary responsibility of the participating States to address trafficking in human beings and tasking the OSCE’s institutions, structures and field operations in clearly defined areas, constitute a comprehensive framework for combating the problem.

In 2003, the OSCE Ministerial Council endorsed the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and established the OSCE Anti-Trafficking Mechanism.

The OSCE has a well-developed institutional capacity and a proven track record in providing effective assistance to the participating States in the implementation of their anti-trafficking commitments. Such concrete actions include helping to establish effective and inclusive national referral mechanisms, as well as to improve identification of victims and ensure that they are provided with guaranteed support and protection.

THE OSCE ACTION PLAN – “prevention, protection, prosecution”

The OSCE Action Plan is the key document providing the framework for the anti-trafficking efforts of the entire organization.

The OSCE Action Plan contains far-reaching recommendations for the participating States on the best ways and means to implement the various anti-trafficking commitments, as well as precise tasks for the OSCE bodies to assist the participating States in this endeavour. The implementation of the Action Plan remains a long-term obligation for the OSCE bodies.

The Action Plan establishes a direct link between the political commitments of the participating States since 1975 and recommendations at the national level in the areas of:

- PREVENTION of trafficking in human beings;
- PROTECTION and assistance;
- investigation, law enforcement and PROSECUTION.

These recommendations draw on the best practices and guidelines elaborated by leading international organizations and NGOs, and build upon the OSCE’s field and institutional experience. They are intended to be implemented by governments in countries of origin, transit and destination. The Action Plan calls for strong co-operation with social actors and grass root NGOs that also play a role in the broad scope of state anti-trafficking activities, and envisages the strategic involvement of a broad array of social actors in the fight against human trafficking.

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

The Office of the Special Representative is headed by Eva Biaudet, who represents the OSCE at the political level in policies concerning trafficking in human beings. The main focus of the Office of the Special Representative is on putting theory into practice and on the implementation of the commitments and of the Action Plan. This entails

- Co-operation with *governments*, helping them to accept and act on their responsibilities for curbing human trafficking.

“Trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” United Nations Convention against transnational organized crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)

- Providing governments with *decision and policy-making* aids and offering guidance on anti-trafficking management, with the aim of arriving at solutions tailored to the needs of the individual countries and in line with international standards.

- Assisting governments to develop the *national anti-trafficking structures* required for efficient internal and transnational co-operation.

- *Raising awareness* to draw attention to the complexity of the problem and to the need for comprehensive solutions.

- Considering *all dimensions* of human trafficking, namely trafficking for sexual exploitation, trafficking for forced and bonded labour, including domestic servitude, trafficking into forced marriages, trafficking in organs and trafficking in children.

- Ensuring the effective *interaction of all agents* and stake holders involved in the fight against human trafficking, ranging from governmental authorities, law enforcement officials to NGOs, and - last but not least - international organizations, as the agencies providing support thorough expertise and know-how.

- Guaranteeing the highest possible *visibility* of the OSCE's fight against human trafficking to focus attention on the issue.

ACTIONS

Eradicating modern-day slavery is an important challenge that the Office of the Special Representative approaches through a wide range of activities.

The Office of the Special Representative visits countries with the aim of raising the political will to implement anti-trafficking strategies and assessing how human trafficking is dealt with in practice.

The purpose is to support, upon request, participating States in putting into practice human trafficking

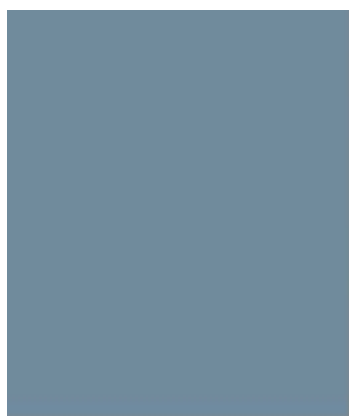
legislation and policies; to explore the actual commitment of governments and government ministers and officials to the issue, and to promote human rights-based approaches in setting up strategies and structures, and putting in place sustainable solutions in the fight against human trafficking.

The mandate reflects the geographically balanced and multidimensional approach of the Organization

The Special Representative and her Office promote the OSCE human rights approach in all its anti-trafficking activities, ranging from training for law enforcement to fighting corruption and organized crime. The Office assists governments and authorities to create national strategies and programmes, such as Anti-trafficking Action Plans, National Co-ordinators, National Rapporteurs, Referral Mechanisms or similar structures. Moreover, the Office participates in the public policy debate on trafficking in human beings in the OSCE region as well as provides direct assistance and support to participating States for awareness raising through media visibility and different events with the purpose of information sharing and data collection.

The Special Representative and her Office maintain a close partnership with the relevant international actors in the fight against human trafficking, such as the European Union, with international organizations including the Council of Europe, UNODC, IOM, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCHR and UNHCR, and with NGOs.

The Special Representative also chairs the unofficial cooperation network of International Organizations and civil society actors under the heading of the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons.



Eva Biaudet

“In Finland, we Swedish speakers have a saying which fits very well into OSCE principles: we are not 6 % persons with 6% needs, just because we represent only 6% of the population. The same can be said of victims of trafficking. Exploited people are not less worthy of protection or have fewer human rights just because they have a history of exploitation and abuse or do not possess our passports”

Former Finnish Member of Parliament Eva Biaudet was appointed OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in October 2006.

She was born in Helsinki and studied law at the University of Helsinki before becoming a Member of Parliament in 1991.

Biaudet represents the OSCE at the political level in questions related to combating trafficking in human beings. She also assists, together with her 8-person team, OSCE participating States in implementing their commitments and co-ordinates OSCE efforts in combating trafficking in human beings.

She was Minister of Health and Social Services and Gender from 1999-2000 and again from 2002-2003. While a minister, Biaudet launched a Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking with colleagues from neighbouring countries. She was also strongly involved in raising awareness and fostering public debate on the problem, leading to legislation. She led the initial work on the Social Partnership in the EU Northern Dimension, addressing THB root causes and assistance. She also has a history of human rights work in non-governmental organizations, especially in the field of child protection, gender and refugees.

Biaudet is a single mother with four children. She speaks Swedish, Finnish, English, French and some German.

■ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for **stability**, **prosperity** and **democracy** in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

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