



## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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

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Vienna, 1 September 2008

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great regret that I have to decline my participation in the “**Seminar on Trafficking in Human Beings with Focus on Forced Labour**”. However, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you our second Occasional Paper which is the proceedings from the 2005 and 2006 OSCE - *Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons* Conference on Trafficking for Labour Exploitation aimed at mobilizing greater political will and provide a forum for the exchange of concrete experiences, including the need to involve a range of stakeholders in order to address this problem. These two conferences covered a number of issues, among them an examination of European and international conventions on the subject of forced and bonded labour, the experiences of NGOs with manifestations of trafficking for forced labour in a wide range of economic sectors, as well as the need for wide co-operation among all stakeholders. Overall, the results from the two conferences shed some light on trafficking for labour exploitation, and on issues that need to be addressed by all stakeholders, including offering some food-for-thought in addressing important questions, such as: where to draw the lines between human trafficking and irregular migration; how to approach this problem effectively; whom to involve in counteracting it; which measures to take to prevent human trafficking into forced and bonded labour, and how to reduce people’s risk of being trapped.

Even more relevant to the work of the OSCE, these two events enabled the Office of the Special Representative to gather considerable knowledge and expertise on the subject with a view to furthering our work in this area in partnership with the participating States toward strengthening and enforcing measures to combat this phenomenon in the region. As a result, I can say that this experience contributed to a great interest and increased dialogue among the

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participating States leading to the two subsequent Ministerial Decisions in Brussels (2006) and Madrid (2007), thus enhancing the States' commitment to address this issue.

Although it remains unknown how many individuals every year are bought and sold, abused and deceived to be coerced into situations of exploitation that amount to slavery, evidence based on research, media reports and statements made by governments points to the fact that this issue is growing. According to ILO, about 2.4 million persons are trafficked and a sizeable profit of 4 billion US dollars per year comes from economic exploitation, of which approximately half of all profits made are confined to the industrialized countries. As such, I would like to take this opportunity prior to the starting of the international conference on **“Decent Work – A Key to Social Justice and Fair Globalization”** to state that unless we achieve decent work for all, trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation will persist and find even more innovative ways to flourish. After all, we all know that one of the root causes of trafficking for labour exploitation, according to the best available evidence, is the demand for inexpensive, socially unprotected and often unauthorized work.

In sum, I recognize that there is no shortage of challenges ahead of us to create an environment conducive to preventing trafficking and exploitation, including overcoming the lack of human and financial resources in addressing THB for labour exploitation. However, let's take the pragmatic approach by putting to use our knowledge, by harvesting the greater political will based on the commitments agreed by the participating States and, let's move forward towards implementation!

I wish you all much success in your deliberations, while counting on your wholehearted support and shared commitment to eradicate this problem.

Sincerely yours,



Eva Biaudet  
Special Representative and Co-ordinator  
for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Attached: Second Occasional Paper “Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> *Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons* Conferences on Human Trafficking for labour Exploitation/Forced and Bonded Labour 2005/2006.