

**“21ST CENTURY SLAVERY -
THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION TO TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS”**

Conference organised by Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See
in conjunction with the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Pontifical Councils for
Justice and Peace and for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People,
and Urbi et Orbi Communications

15-16 May 2002, Rome, Vatican

These panel discussion remarks are from the Anti-Trafficking Adviser at the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR). The views and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect views or policies of OSCE or of the ODIHR.

Good afternoon, My name is Jyothi Kanics and I am the Anti-Trafficking Adviser at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The ODIHR is the main human rights institution of the OSCE, which has fifty-five participating States.

Since we have limited time this afternoon, I shall not try to present everything that the ODIHR is doing to prevent and to combat trafficking in human beings. You can find an overview of that on our web site or contact me for more details after this meeting. Instead of focusing on what we are doing, I would like rather to focus on how we can do it better. The points I am about to raise may seem simple and straightforward, but I feel that they are worth stressing and elaborating further because in practice they often may prove to be challenging. Also, I strongly feel that we need to reflect more not only on what we do, but that we need to be more responsible in how we do it. I'll just briefly touch on six points and I ask the audience to consider which points you would add to such recommendations.

- 1) First, we must use a common definition, the one put forth in the UN trafficking protocol, among other things to ensure: quality and comparability of data, standards for identification of victims and perpetrators, as well as monitoring standards and a co-ordinated response. At the highest political level, the OSCE welcomed the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. Most recently, in the Bucharest Ministerial Decision of last year, OSCE participating States committed themselves to signing and ratifying the Convention and its trafficking protocol.
- 2) Secondly, international organizations need to be clear about their mandates, resources and priorities. At a policy level, the OSCE's approach is outlined in the OSCE Anti-Trafficking Guidelines. The OSCE has a comprehensive view of security, which cuts across three dimensions: politico-military, economic and human dimensions. Trafficking is a cross-cutting issue, which must be addressed in all these areas and therefore it is a priority for the OSCE. OSCE field missions and institutions have very different mandates and resources to work on this issue. The ODIHR tackles trafficking with a human rights based approach. In practice, the ODIHR and OSCE

field missions regularly exchange information with other IOs in order to avoid duplication of efforts, to exchange good practice and to strategise for a common political approach towards host governments. In addition, we have projects which support data collection and information exchange. For example, the second edition of an updated and expanded inventory of the trafficking situation and responses in South Eastern Europe will soon be published as the result of a joint project carried out by UNICEF / UNOHCHR and the ODIHR under the framework of the Stability Pact Task Force.

- 3) International organizations should also work in a transparent manner and set up mechanisms for regular information exchange, not only among IOs and donors, but also with grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. IOs have a unique role to play in facilitating dialogue between NGOs and government agencies, as well as between different regions of the world. Furthermore, we should not be afraid of the media, but as we discussed yesterday, we should invest time in educating them about this issue and in looking for new ways to co-operate with them to raise awareness and to advocate for necessary changes.
- 4) My next point is that IOs should design projects with measurable results and should prioritize institution building and sustainability when implementing projects. My colleagues have already spoken about how this works in practice with project design. Yet, we could still do more to better assess and evaluate our activities.
- 5) I have to say that I am surprised that this next topic I shall raise has not been mentioned at all during this conference thus far, which means it is all the more important to raise it now. IOs should educate their staff about this problem and put mechanisms in place to discipline personnel who contribute to the problem rather than being part of the solution. Of course, the OSCE provides some training on human rights issues, as well as the OSCE anti-trafficking guidelines, to its staff. Yet, much more could and should be done in order to prepare personnel to recognize trafficking and to respond to it in the field. The OSCE has also amended its Code of Conduct to mention trafficking specifically and is currently in consultation with other IOs regarding good practice in this area.
- 6) My final recommendation is that we must put human rights first. In particular, this includes protecting the privacy and confidentiality of victims and witnesses and working with NGOs and governments (especially law enforcement) to agree on principles for identifying victims and for establishing a referral mechanism to protect and to assist victims. Finally, there is the question of how to protect the victim's rights when investigating and prosecuting a transnational crime such as trafficking. Again, this is a very challenging area where we must work together to set new standards to ensure that human rights protection extends beyond the borders of states.