

Background of Select Activities

The OSCE/ODIHR carries out a wide variety of anti-trafficking activities in co-operation with OSCE participating States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other international organizations (IOs). Raising awareness among OSCE participating States also remains a priority. Therefore, ODIHR staff regularly exchange information with the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings, which is composed of interested OSCE delegations and based in Vienna. Within this context, the ODIHR advocates for the further elaboration of OSCE commitments, which will ensure that the rights of trafficked persons are protected.

The ODIHR also supports OSCE field missions in their efforts to prevent trafficking and to assist victims. With this aim in mind, the ODIHR administers the Anti-Trafficking Project Fund, providing grants up to 25,000 Euro to further develop OSCE field work and activities. The Fund has thus far supported twenty-five projects in eleven countries, as well as regional activities. The ODIHR consults with field missions to promote the development of co-ordinated policies and projects with other international organizations and local NGOs. Projects supported by the Fund cover a wide range of initiatives from research and hotline counseling services to training of law enforcement. The ODIHR views it as a continuing priority to work together with OSCE field missions to further develop and monitor coherent and integrated national anti-trafficking strategies in line with the Stability Pact Task Force Guidelines for National Plans of Action.

As a member of the Stability Pact Task Force's Co-ordination Team, the ODIHR consults with other agencies to set priorities and to define joint approaches to combating trafficking in South Eastern Europe. Most recently, under the framework of the Stability Pact, UNICEF, UNOHCHR and ODIHR commissioned an expert to update and to expand the publication *Trafficking in Human Beings in South Eastern Europe*. Furthermore, the ODIHR networks and exchanges information with the Geneva-based IGO Contact Group on Trafficking and Smuggling, which is currently chaired by ILO and UNHCR.

Finally, the ODIHR designs and implements anti-trafficking projects in co-operation with partners from governmental agencies, NGOs and IOs. By facilitating round table events and joint training initiatives including both NGO and governmental partners, the ODIHR, in co-operation with OSCE field missions, seeks to establish effective and inclusive national referral mechanisms (including identification, referral and assistance) addressing all target groups as defined in the UN Protocol, which OSCE participating States have committed themselves to ratify. Measures to develop, implement and monitor national referral mechanisms should include capacity building for all relevant agencies and strengthening of the legal framework. Another recent ODIHR publication, *The Reference Guide for Anti-Trafficking Legislative Review*, should serve as a tool in this respect for both lawmakers and NGOs advocating necessary reforms.

Challenges and Opportunities for 2003

Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings remains a high priority for many OSCE participating States. The ODIHR's Anti-Trafficking Unit recognises this as an opportunity to build on our awareness raising work and to **move forward with our partners to shape policy and to transform commitments into action**. With regards to influencing policy developments, the ODIHR must push for progressive, human rights based measures within the Informal Group of OSCE Delegations, the Geneva-based IGO contact group and in other fora. While the OSCE now has several strong commitments and standards in this field, much remains for us to do in regards to implementing

these commitments fully and to monitoring developments, as well as to considering how the OSCE can further contribute to setting new standards in this field. In this regard, the ODIHR looks forward to continued close co-operation with the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings and to the elaboration of an **OSCE Action Plan** to combat trafficking in human beings.

As the ODIHR and OSCE field missions engage in more and more anti-trafficking initiatives, another opportunity emerges—the potential for us to exchange good practice, materials and expertise among ourselves and with our partners. Yet, co-ordination and information exchange should be more structured and institutionalized. For instance, recommendations from Balkans regional meetings during 2002, which call upon the ODIHR to develop its role as a **facilitator and clearinghouse within the OSCE**, should be considered and supported. In this regard, the ODIHR organized an internal side meeting with anti-trafficking focal points from OSCE field missions in Ioannina, Greece in February 2003.

One of the most difficult challenges facing us when trying to address trafficking is the often transborder nature of the crime. Time and again the ODIHR's Anti-Trafficking Unit has stressed the need for **regional approaches** to trafficking and related issues. As a regional organization, this is not only our responsibility, but also another opportunity and strength for the OSCE. With this in mind, the ODIHR will continue its support to and co-operation with the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, putting a particular emphasis on the promotion of human rights in this context.

Besides its regional work in South Eastern Europe, with the addition of a new expert seconded by Germany, the ODIHR can finally follow-up on the recommendations from the Berlin Conference. Since the groundbreaking Berlin Conference and more recent initiatives such as the Brussels STOP conference, a serious process has begun both to evaluate the situation in countries of destination and to set up new structures to improve the response in these countries. The ODIHR is pursuing a very active role in this respect as we hope to have a representative on the **European Expert Group**, which will advise the EC on anti-trafficking policy issues.

Activities and Strategic Plan for 2003

As outlined above, the ODIHR's Anti-Trafficking Unit will build on its previous initiatives to prevent trafficking in human beings and to assist its victims. The ODIHR will continue to assist OSCE field missions in developing their anti-trafficking initiatives and to support them through the *Anti-Trafficking Project Fund*. It is also hoped that through the Fund the ODIHR will have the flexibility to respond to the urgent needs of the NGO community, which assists and protects victims.

As part of its joint programme of activities with the EC and the OSCE Office in Minsk, the ODIHR will engage in further consultation with all relevant partners and plans to organize an *NGO-government round table to prevent and to combat trafficking in human beings in Belarus* with the aim of closely co-ordinating future priority activities.

Regionally, the ODIHR will continue to serve on the *Stability Pact Task Force's* expert co-ordination team and to *monitor responses to trafficking in South Eastern Europe* as part of a joint project with UNICEF and UNOHCHR entitled SEE RIGHTS. This follows on the successful collaboration in 2002, which resulted in the revision and expansion of the report "Trafficking in Human Beings in South Eastern Europe." In the future, the data and analysis from the SEE RIGHTS project will be made available and kept up-to-date on-line.

Also with a regional approach, in the Caucasus the ODIHR will continue its *efforts to strengthen NGO capacity to combat trafficking*. This project is closely co-ordinated with the ODIHR's Gender Unit, which trains women's NGOs throughout the region, and OSCE field missions, which have also begun to support initiatives to raise awareness about the risks of trafficking.

As always, the ODIHR Anti-Trafficking Unit stands ready to assist participating States in fulfilling their commitments. In particular, the ODIHR will continue to support *legislative review and reform efforts* in close co-operation with the CoE, the UNODC and ABA/CEELI.

Focusing on countries of destination, together with Anti-Slavery International, the ODIHR plans to implement a multi-country NGO advocacy program targeting EU member States with the aim of *transforming international and regional anti-trafficking standards into national legislation*.

Furthermore, the ODIHR plans to organize a conference in co-operation with the International Labour Organization. This *conference will focus on unprotected labour markets in countries of destination* and in particular will discuss models for promoting and monitoring the human rights of migrant workers. It is clear that this progressive approach will bring a new perspective to addressing the demand side of the trafficking equation and provide us with recommendations for this year's *special HDIM session on the rights of migrants workers*.

Finally, in Spring of 2003 the ODIHR will publish its *Handbook on Guidelines and Principles for Designing and Implementing National Referral Mechanisms*. This handbook will be a tool for creating and monitoring national referral mechanisms, which should create a co-operative framework through which state actors fulfill their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficked persons in co-ordination and strategic partnership with civil society and other actors dealing with trafficked victims.