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Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATION
OF THE ANNUAL REPORT BY THE
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND CO-ORDINATOR FOR
COMBATTING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS
MS. EVA BIAUDET
689TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
22 NOVEMBER 2007**

Canada is pleased to welcome the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ms. Eva Biaudet, a little more than one year after she assumed her functions. We thank her for the comprehensive report she has provided of her activities over that year. We are all the more thankful that she was able to provide the report to delegations one full week before her presentation, so as to allow us to study it in detail ahead of today's PC. This is a practice that should be emulated by other OSCE bodies and institutions.

We also must convey our appreciation for the energy, dynamism and engagement that Ms. Biaudet has brought to her position.

The recent conferences of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons and discussions at human dimension events have highlighted the challenges that authorities and civil society continue to face when combating the scourge of trafficking in persons. Difficulties remain at the three levels of intervention: prevention, protection and prosecution.

To seek to overcome these challenges, we must look for concrete, adapted and realistic ways for the OSCE to make our fight against trafficking more effective. Providing assistance to States in implementing their commitments and the recommendations in the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, sharing best practices, supporting data acquisition, as well as fostering greater coordination within the anti-trafficking community are areas where the OSCE anti-trafficking institutions, and the Special Representative in particular, can make a difference. As the Special Representative does, we support an approach that also concentrates on the needs of the victims, that promotes human rights and that is gender-sensitive.

We also support the Special Representative's efforts to examine more targeted responses to address trafficking for labour exploitation. Different problems may indeed require different approaches. Recent discussions at the OSCE on trafficking for labour exploitation have served usefully to focus attention in capitals on this issue. Canada is fully committed to combating trafficking for purposes of all forms of exploitation, including forced labour. Discussions of a Ministerial Council decision are ongoing on this subject. In our view, we should avoid casting the net too wide by seeking to address broader issues such as migration policies or even labour market economics, when dealing with this issue, as this can veer us off track from meeting our objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

For Canada, the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons remains the key instrument that provides the framework for international action to combat trafficking in persons. We echo calls for

wider ratification and implementation of this key instrument. We remind States Parties that have not yet done so to fulfill their reporting obligations on implementation of the Trafficking Protocol, which will also serve to better target technical assistance efforts. OSCE participating States also have their own road map in the OSCE Action Plan. States must allocate adequate resources to implement their obligations and commitments in the fight against trafficking. In such transboundary matters, the chain is as strong as its weakest link.

We also have to caution that the OSCE institutions should focus on implementation of commitments agreed amongst all OSCE participating States. While we fully subscribe to the need for coordination and cooperation with other international bodies to avoid duplication, Canada does not believe that OSCE institutions should focus on pursuing the implementation of obligations undertaken by some participating States within the Council of Europe, an organization to which Canada is not a member. We have our own commitments in the OSCE – let us concentrate on their implementation.

In Canada, we have continued to work to implement our obligations under the UN Protocol, as well as our OSCE commitments. Over the past two years, Canada has put new measures into place at the federal level, including the establishment of guidelines for immigration officers to issue temporary resident permits of 180 days to foreign nationals identified in Canada as victims of trafficking. These temporary resident permits allow the victims time to reflect on their situation and options and also provide access to interim federal health care benefits and the possibility to apply for a work permit. Moreover, the permits are not conditional on whether the

victim cooperates with the police in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers.

Mr. Chairman,

We took good note of the Special Representative's proposed program of work for 2008, and we broadly endorse its orientations. Amongst other areas of activity, we are supportive of the focus on child trafficking, placing victims at the center of the development of responses and programmes, efforts to help identifying more victims and examining challenges to prosecutions and convictions. We also look forward to the publication of the survey on national anti-trafficking structures and policies among participating States.

We also support the SR's proposed initiative to engage in a policy dialogue in South Eastern Europe. Canada already is funding ODIHR's Anti-Trafficking Program in that region, which focuses on identification, protection and access to justice.

We thank the Special Representative for her work in fostering a consultative process among the OSCE anti-trafficking bodies and her efforts to build synergies with other international organizations working to fight human trafficking, such as the UNODC. We encourage her to continue in that vein as this can only contribute to the value added of the OSCE.

In closing, Canada wishes Ms Biaudet and her office all the best in fulfilling their mandate in the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.