



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

17th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference
“Trafficking in Children and the Best Interests of the Child”

Opening Remarks by
Amb. Madina Jarbussynova, Special Representative and Co-ordinator for
Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Vienna, 03 April 2017

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

It is my sincere honour to open this year's 17th *Alliance* against Trafficking in Persons Conference. In my capacity as OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, it is also my pleasure to chair this first opening session. Before doing so, however, I would like to bring firmly into focus those who we are seeking to protect at this year's conference.

VIDEO PLAYS (1 minute, 6 seconds)

Ladies and gentlemen,

We owe it to children everywhere to ensure that their voices are heard and that their fears are mitigated, for regardless of age, status, origin, or indeed whether they are fleeing crisis or not, all children deserve a safe and nurturing childhood. Far too many are currently being failed in this respect. Indeed, as pointed out in a 2016 report on *The State of the World's Children* by one of our Alliance partners, UNICEF, it is estimated that 5.5 million children are currently engaged in forced labour, with thousands more subjected to abuse, forced into marriage and coerced into militias. This is quite simply unacceptable and lends even more urgency to the need to protect this most vulnerable section of society.

In conjunction with our Alliance Partners and the OSCE Field Missions, the theme of "Trafficking in Children and the Best Interests of the Child" was therefore chosen, so as to provide a forum in which participants could analyse case studies, exchange good practices and develop more integrated, effective and expert recommendations to adequately respond to child trafficking in a

manner respectful of human rights.

This is why it gives me great pride to see so many representatives from the OSCE participating States here today – your presence sends an important message to traffickers that the OSCE region will not stand idly by and allow children to be harmed. The practical and child-focused recommendations emerging from this conference will also be developed so as to assist the OSCE participating States in implementing their OSCE anti-trafficking commitments, notably the 2005 Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and its 2013 Addendum, in particular, regarding the need to prevent child trafficking and protect victims.

I am also heartened to see such a wide-range of stakeholders present today, who in many cases have made a long journey to be with us. I welcome this broad participatory approach, especially given that in today's challenging environment, no one authority or agency can cope alone with the magnitude and complexity of the challenges involved. It is precisely for this reason that the Alliance Platform, comprised of international, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations that have joined forces to prevent and combat human trafficking, remains more vital than ever.

Your Excellencies,

Before briefly presenting the conference agenda, allow me to present and pass the floor to each of our distinguished opening speakers.

Firstly, I am pleased to introduce **Michael Linhart, Austrian Deputy Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs**. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my personal gratitude to the 2017 Austrian OSCE

Chairmanship for the fruitful co-operation my Office has enjoyed with the Chairmanship team to date.— Your Excellency, the floor is yours.

THANK YOU, MINISTER. We look forward to further successful co-operation in putting together the Austrian Task force October's Conference on the inter-link between trafficking in human beings and crisis situations. I also wish to thank the Chairmanship for this morning informative side-visit to the Austrian Criminal Intelligence Service's Joint Operational Office, as well as the Head of Unit for combating human smuggling and trafficking, Colonel Tatzgern, for the insight into regional criminal investigations aimed at improving crime detection. I also take this opportunity to wish you, dear Minister, and your team continued success in achieving progress across all three Chairmanship priorities.

Our next speaker is all too familiar with the fact that what often begins as a humanitarian crisis swiftly grows into a security crisis, along with the nexus between emergencies and human exploitation across the OSCE region. It is my pleasure to call upon **OSCE Secretary General Zannier** to give, to my regret, his last address to the Alliance Conference in this capacity - dear Secretary General, many thanks for being here with us today, you have the floor.

THANK YOU, MR SECRETARY GENERAL, not only for your commitment in raising the profile of the anti-trafficking agenda since entering office in 2011, but also for your invaluable support in ensuring the effective implementation of my Office's mandate over the years.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This January, Pope Francis delivered, on the occasion of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, a remarkably powerful message on “Child Migrants,

the Vulnerable and the Voiceless”, which drew much deserved attention to the realities facing vulnerable children, especially those who are alone. As I had the pleasure of learning about His Holiness’ extensive commitment to fight human trafficking and forced labour globally, and the privilege of assisting the highly commendable work of the Santa Marta Group, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker, **Father Michael Czerny, Under-Secretary in the Vatican’s newly established Migrants & Refugees Section**, under the leadership and coordination of the Pope.

Father Czerny has been active in the field of social justice for over thirty years across the globe, having previously served as Director of the Human Rights Institute at the Central American University (UCA) in San Salvador, Secretary for Social Justice at the Jesuit General Curia in Rome, director of the African Jesuit AIDS Network and indeed as an advisor at the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace –we are extremely delighted to have you here with us today, Father, the floor is yours.

THANK YOU, Father Czerny. I would like to once again thank the Holy See for his firm commitment to combating the trafficking of human beings and look forward to further excellent co-operation with his Holiness in the coming months.

Distinguished Participants,

Allow me to briefly present our two-day agenda.

Our first panel today, entitled *Human Trafficking Threats for Children in Crisis*, will provide an overview of the crisis-inflicted scenarios that directly or indirectly affect children’s security and welfare in the OSCE region, along with

highlighting factors that increase children's vulnerability to falling victim to trafficking in human beings. A special emphasis will be placed on children on the move, including unaccompanied minors and internally displaced children.

Tomorrow we will begin with a second panel focusing on effective child protection systems to prevent and combat human trafficking. The panel will also elaborate on how to determine the best interests of the child, pre-conditions for a child-friendly environment and the importance of empowering exploited children to realise their rights and seek access to justice.

Please note that you can register to deliver statements with our colleague, Oleksandr Kyrylenko. That said, we also encourage questions to our panellists from all participants.

Following this second panel, four thematic sessions will take place during the lunch break. These are designed to complement the main panel discussions and offer a comprehensive understanding of a number of other pressing aspects of child trafficking.

Offered only in the Russian language, the first of these thematic sessions will discuss the as yet largely unexplored link between trafficking in human beings for the purpose of terrorism; in particular how these phenomena manifest to severely and adversely affect vulnerable and marginalized groups such as children and youth. In line with the priorities of the Austrian Chairmanship, we are supporting a group of experts to investigate and analyse the nexus between terrorism with trafficking and its potential implications for the OSCE region, including how best to prevent this phenomenon.

In our second thematic session, co-organized with the Permanent

Representation of France to the OSCE and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, panellists will discuss the objectives and results of an OSCE extra budgetary project implemented in Montenegro between June 2015 and June 2017 with the kind support of France, entitled “The prevention of early (forced) marriages among vulnerable groups”. My special thanks to **Ambassador Veronique Roger-Lacan**, Permanent Representative of France to the OSCE and **Ambassador Slavica Milacic**, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the OSCE, for being with us to deliver the opening address of this session.

The third thematic session, co-organized by the Transnational Threats Department/Strategic Police Matters Unit in co-ordination with my Office, will provide a comprehensive overview of the latest research and best practices that exist, so that OSCE participating States may adopt the best legal framework, methodology and techniques for correctly interviewing child victims. I thank our Secretariat colleagues for this combined OSCE effort.

Our final thematic session, "the Review of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Light of New Human Trafficking Trends", co-organized by my Office and the Permanent Representation of Belarus to the OSCE, aims at highlighting the importance of the Review and the need for an active engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including regional and international organizations. It will also discuss how to reflect new developments in the area of fighting human trafficking in any possible outcome document of the Review.

I thank Belarus for the excellent collaboration in this initiative and indeed during my recent visit to the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking in New York. My Office is closely following developments on the Review of the Global Plan of Action. To that end, I wish to express my

appreciation for the role of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons - ICAT – in supporting this critical process - it is a pleasure for the OSCE to be a Partner of ICAT and I warmly thank UNODC, UNICEF, OHCHR, ILO and IOM, for their co-operation in this session and in all our joint endeavours - I look forward to further coaction in the coming months.

Following these thematic sessions, the final panel of this year's Alliance Conference will present all practical recommendations collected and developed during each previous panel and thematic session. Panellists will also look to the future and offer their concluding thoughts on how States can strengthen their child protection systems and relevant policies. The recommendations may then be shared to help practitioners find new or alternative solutions to overcome any encountered difficulties.

I am convinced that this busy and fascinating schedule will allow us to make a significant contribution to highlighting and mitigating the scourge of child trafficking, ladies and gentlemen, until all of them are safe.

Thank you.