



## **BRDO PROCESS MINISTERIAL MEETING**

Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia

15 – 16 March 2018

## **JOINT DECLARATION**

**of**

**the Ministers of Interior of South-East Europe**

**on**

**Strengthening regional cooperation in SEE to combat trafficking in human beings**

WE, the Ministers of Interior and Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of South-East Europe (SEE), on the occasion of the meeting organised within the framework of the Brdo Process, held in Brdo pri Kranju on 16 March 2018, endorse the following declaration:

THANKING Slovenia for organising and hosting the meeting and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), for its support as the Secretariat of the Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of South-East Europe;

RECALLING the commitments made by the SEE Anti-Trafficking Coordinators, as stated in the Joint Declaration on Enhancing Transnational Referral Mechanisms (TRM) and Strengthening Cooperation in Cases of Human Trafficking of 4 October 2012;

NOTING that the perpetrators of trafficking in human beings take advantage of people in vulnerable situations, especially people suffering from poverty, discrimination, gender inequality, lack of access to education, conflict, natural disasters and other crisis situations;

EMPHASISING that, as the crime of trafficking in human beings is constantly evolving, other crimes connected to it, such as migrant smuggling, corruption, cybercrime, financial crime and terrorism, also need to be adequately addressed;

ENCOURAGING the continued inclusion of new actors in the anti-trafficking community, particularly partnerships with the private sector in combating trafficking in human beings;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of local, regional and international cooperation, in order to ensure comprehensive and effective assistance, support and protection for trafficked people;

RECOGNISING the need for continuous knowledge transfer and exchange of good practices and experience in the SEE region in all aspects of combating the crime of trafficking in human beings, as well as the contributions that Governments, international organisations, civil society and other stakeholders can make;

MINDFUL of the need for improved data collection, analysis and research on trafficking in human beings, as called for by the UN General Assembly in the Political Declaration on the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons adopted on 28 September 2017;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Recommendations of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

COGNISANT of the priorities proposed by the European Commission to step up the EU's efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings as set out in the Communication on the follow-up to the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of trafficking in human beings and identifying further concrete actions, dated 4 December 2017 (COM(2017)728);

In a spirit of mutual trust and resolve, COMMIT TO:

- 1) **Continuous monitoring** of developments related to trafficking in human beings as a necessary precondition for adapting response mechanisms to the real-life situations;
- 2) Applying a multidisciplinary and human rights-based approach to:
  - ensuring effective and proactive **identification** of trafficked persons, while fully respecting their human rights and dignity;
  - providing adequate **protection and assistance** to victims of trafficking;
  - ensuring effective **prosecution** of perpetrators;
  - strengthening **partnerships** with representatives to the civil and private sector;
- 3) Promoting activities that raise **public awareness** and improve **prevention** of human trafficking;
- 4) Sharing lessons learned and exchanging **good practices** among ourselves and with our counterparts from the European Union to improve coordination and policy coherence;
- 5) Highlighting the importance of demand reduction as the key factor of the fight against human trafficking;
- 6) Continuing to explore avenues for setting up **formal compensation mechanisms** for trafficked people within general systems for compensating victims of crime;
- 7) Devoting attention to the relevance of **internet-based technologies** in the trafficking phenomenon and in combating trafficking, particularly new forms of recruitment via social networks;
- 8) Continue the fruitful cooperation in addressing the above issues within the **Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of SEE**: coordinating the anti-trafficking response in the SEE region, identifying common issues of interest, and defining joint actions. To that end, the Network has, since its establishment in 2010, proved an invaluable platform for fostering regional cooperation and advancing the fight against trafficking in human beings in the SEE region. The role of ICMPD as the Secretariat of this initiative has been commendable in availing of its technical support and expertise to facilitate the regular meetings of the Network thereby promote regional cooperation;
- 9) Holding the meetings of the network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of SEE twice a year, with technical and expert support from ICMPD.