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REPORT*

“The Role of Parliaments in Preventing Human Trafficking – Legal and Political Aspects”

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Trafficking in human beings is a general term covering a wide range of exploitative practices: migrant smuggling, trade in children, labour and sexual exploitation, trade in human organs. The root causes of human trafficking are various and often differ from country to country. This complex phenomenon is caused by various political, economic, social and other factors and constitutes a crime against the individual and the state security. Therefore, action to prevent trafficking, prosecute the traffickers and protect the victims, has important political context.
2. Given the global character of this type of organized crime, its combat represents much more than a national duty for the states. Each country has the responsibility to establish the necessary synergies at national, regional and international levels and ensure an efficient prevention and counteraction. It requires a close cooperation among governments, international organizations and the civil society, to strengthen the coordination of counteraction. The close collaboration among the countries of origin, of transit and of destination, is fundamental for the elimination of human trafficking. It is also important that the specialized governmental agencies, the civil society and the NGOs, to strengthen their endeavors and ensure that human trafficking victims can get the assistance they need.
3. The PABSEC has addressed the issues concerning setting up the sufficient legal framework for the development of the economic cooperation in the Black Sea region, focused on the important aspects of human trafficking. The Assembly came up with the Reports and Recommendations¹ on improvement of the legislative framework in the Black Sea region, in the related fields of cooperation. In these documents, the national parliaments place a particular importance to the establishment of a proper legislative framework, compatible to the international standards which meet the challenges regarding the human trafficking. The PABSEC has recommended to join efforts at national and regional levels, to promote the cooperation and to implement adequate preventive measures against organized crime, including the trafficking in human beings.
4. Taking into account that the human trafficking is a subject of a world-wide concern and continues to grow, despite the efforts of the world community and the BSEC Member States, the Legal and Political Affairs Committee, at its Fifty-Sixth Meeting, on 8 October 2020, decided to discuss “The Role of Parliaments in Preventing Human Trafficking – Legal and Political Aspects”, as the main issue of the agenda of its Fifty-Seventh Meeting.
5. Strengthening the cooperation among the Member States in preventing organized crime, including trafficking of human beings, represents one of the major aims of the “BSEC Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership” Goal 16 “Combating Organized Crime, Illegal Trafficking of Drugs and Weapons, Terrorism, Corruption and Money Laundering”. The main activities in this field are carried out by the BSEC Working Group on Combating Crime, in Particular, in its Organized Forms. The Ministers in charge of Interior (Public order) of the Member States, have adopted several declarations on how to strengthen the cooperation among the national authorities of the BSEC Member States, involved in preventing and fighting against transnational crimes, including trafficking in human beings.

¹ *Report and Recommendation 15/1996 on Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries in Combating Organized Crime; Report and Recommendation 17/1996 on Basic Principles of the Black Sea Convention on Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism; Report and Recommendation 35/1999 on Legal Framework on Combating Trafficking in People; Report and Recommendation 43/2000 on Legislative Framework for Cooperation among the Law-Enforcing, Customs and Immigration Authorities; Report and Recommendation 124/2011 on Implementation of the Agreements among the BSEC Member States on Combating Organized Crime*

6. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in 2020, many of the victims of human trafficking detected across the world, are females. The number of children victims has tripled in the past 15 years. Most of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, are females, more than half of the victims of trafficking for forced labour, are men. Given the hidden nature of this crime, the actual number of the trafficked victims is far higher. Overall, 50 % of the detected victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation, 38 % were exploited for forced labour, 6 % were subject to forced criminal activity, while 1 % were coerced into begging and smaller numbers into forced marriages, organ removal, and other purposes.
7. The COVID-19 pandemic amplifies socio-economic inequalities, increasing the number of the potential victims of human trafficking. The most vulnerable groups, even in high-income countries, are those suffering the most in the pandemic recession. The latest developments regarding the pandemic, call for a more integrated approach by the states, including measures for prevention and law-enforcement, the involvement of a wider range of legal structures and the establishment of broader sanctions – criminal, administrative and civil – related to preventing human trafficking. All these activities require a strong political will and the public support.
8. The present report reflects the information received from the national delegations of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. It also benefits from relevant Internet resources.

II. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND EXPERIENCE

9. **The United Nations** has been leading the fight against human trafficking for many decades, by setting up certain obligations of the States, under public international law. The UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, of 1949, is the first comprehensive treaty using the term “traffic in persons”. In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, with its two Protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, known as the “Palermo Protocol”, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Article 9 of the Palermo Protocol requires the States to establish comprehensive policies and programmes to prevent the trafficking in persons and combat it, as well as to protect the victims of human trafficking, in particular women and children. All the BSEC Member States have ratified the Palermo Protocol.
10. In 2015, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted - a series of 17 goals and 169 targets, to guide the inclusive global development. The leaders have committed to “take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025, end child labour in all its forms”.
11. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) pursues long-standing projects against human trafficking with an emphasis on practical counter-trafficking efforts. In addition, specialized UN agencies address human trafficking and coordinate their work through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT). It serves as a policy forum mandated by the UN General Assembly, being open to other relevant international organizations. Through the local offices in different regions of the world, IOM provides overall analyses and outlines projects and programmes for the rehabilitation of trafficked persons.

12. **The Council of Europe** Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 3 May 2005, covers different forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery and the removal of organs. The main added value of the Convention is its human rights perspective and focus on victim protection. It defines trafficking in human beings as a “violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being”. The Convention provides for a series of rights for victims of trafficking, in particular, the right to be identified as a victim, to be protected and assisted, to be given a recovery, to be granted a renewable residence permit, and to receive compensation for the suffered damages. The Convention sets up a system to supervise the implementation of the obligations contained in it, which consists of two pillars: Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Committee of the Parties.
13. In 2003, **the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** adopted the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and created the post of Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Office of the Special Representative assists the participating States in the implementation of the OSCE commitments, through technical assistance and capacity building. It also conducts research and helps develop policies on persistent and emerging trends in the field of human trafficking. The lack of prosecution for trafficking cases is a challenge that affects all the OSCE Member States, without exception. For this reason, the Republic of Albania focused on combating trafficking in human beings as one of its main priorities, during its OSCE 2020 Chairpersonship. The OSCE Action Plan provides the framework for the OSCE activities, in support of the anti-trafficking efforts of the OSCE participating States. It contains core commitments for action at the national level, such as: Prevention, including addressing root causes and awareness-raising; Prosecution, including investigation and adjudication; Protection of victims’ rights, including assistance and compensation; Partnerships, highlighting the need for enhanced co-operation with international organizations and other external partners, including on issues related to law enforcement, and joint work between public institutions and the private sector.
14. The OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons is a broad international forum that includes national stakeholders, international, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations as well as trade unions and academics, in joining forces to combat trafficking in human beings. As a platform for advocacy and cooperation, it was launched in 2004, to improve synergy in responding to this crime, to develop effective joint strategies among the OSCE participating States. It works closely with several Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Cooperation with innovative and coordinated approaches, to strengthen the prevention of trafficking in human beings.
15. **The European Union** has adopted specific common legal standards in human trafficking, which are set by the Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. The European Commission monitors the situation of human trafficking in its Member States and publishes information online. In addition, Directive 2009/52/EC provides sanctions for the employers who offer work or services to a person who is known to be a victim of such trafficking. The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (EU ATC), which is elaborated by the EU Anti-trafficking Directive, is responsible for improving coordination and coherence among the EU institutions, EU agencies and international actors. It also aims at developing the existing and the new EU policies, to address the human trafficking. To this end, joint efforts to address trafficking in human beings, continue to be fostered among the EU Network of National Rapporteurs or Equivalent Mechanisms, the EU Civil Society Platform and the Coordination Network of the EU

Agencies' contact points on trafficking in human beings, including via regular meetings. Europol and Eurojust have a prominent role in actively combating human trafficking.

16. Responsible for promoting the cooperation and mutual assistance between the criminal police authorities, the **International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)**, plays a major role in combating human trafficking. It has organized numerous events for the training of national police in the fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. It works closely with other key bodies involved in the fight against human trafficking, including Eurojust, Europol, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the OSCE, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It organizes annually, the Global Conference on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling. In order to better combat human trafficking and international crime, the G7 Interior Ministers decided, at their meeting in Paris of April 2019, to increase the operational cooperation and the exchange of relevant law enforcement information, via Interpol.
17. **The BSEC Working Group on Combating Crime, in Particular in its Organized Forms** aims to enhance the cooperation among the BSEC Member States, in combating organized crime activities, such as the trafficking of human beings, drugs, weapons and radioactive materials, corruption, smuggling of motor vehicles and cyber-crime, as well as money laundering and illicit financial activities. The Working Group meets in regular meetings, at least once a year, and its activities are based on the implementation of the Plan of Action. The basic documents elaborated by the Working Group are: "Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its organized forms" (Corfu, 1998); "Additional Protocol to the Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its organized forms" (Kiev, 2002); "Additional Protocol on Combating Terrorism to the Agreement among the Governments of the BSEC participating States on cooperation in combating crime in particular in its organized forms" (Athens, 2004). The Kiev Additional Protocol set up a "Network of Liaison Officers on Combating Crime". One of its recent priorities is strengthening cooperation among the border law enforcement and immigration agencies of the BSEC Member States, aiming to achieve integrated border management, by establishing and maintaining direct channels of communication.
18. In the framework of the Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Office of the National Rapporteur on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, jointly organized the Conference "Enhancing Anti-Trafficking Response in the Black Sea Region", in Athens, on 2 December 2019. The conference provided current information on the challenges related to the identification of presumed victims of human trafficking, the possibilities and needs of preventing human trafficking in supply chains of public entities, as well as the role of the technology in preventing human trafficking.

III. THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING – LEGAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

19. Trafficking in human beings is a multifaceted crime, which involves a variety of other violations, such as participation in organized criminal groups, smuggling of migrants, obstruction of justice, corruption, money-laundering, document fraud, sexual and labour exploitation. The fight against trafficking in human beings is a priority for every state and for the international community. In view of the specific international nature of this crime, cooperation and coordination between the states of origin, transit and destination, as well as between their specialised institutions and structures, making full use of the international mechanisms established for this purpose, is of particular importance.

20. At national level, a comprehensive framework of prevention requires that the legislation reflect a strong commitment to eliminate the human trafficking. The variety of the different forms of this type of organized crime calls for a multi-sectoral response, including diversified crime prevention strategies, involving different institutions, from law enforcement and anti-organized crime agencies, to labour inspectors, national human rights institutions, child protection services, social and mental health organizations. The legislative framework engaged in anti-trafficking measures, refers to the set of labour laws and codes, laws addressing organized crime and sexual offences, child protection laws, laws relating to health, criminal codes, etc. Expanding the criminal liability in many of these human trafficking-related laws, is an integral part of a comprehensive legal approach to combat trafficking.
21. Human trafficking cannot be combated through prosecution or crime control alone. The legislative environment must encompass a wide-ranging guideline aimed at preventing victimization, at protecting those who have suffered from the crime and prosecuting the criminals. The anti-trafficking legislation should also recognize the trafficked persons as victims entitled to basic human rights. It must be effectively enforced, and its implementation regularly monitored. In addition, the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking, is a complex and time-consuming process that requires a rigorous training and the commitment of law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities.
22. The identification of the root causes, which increase people's vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation, is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of preventive policies to combat human trafficking. People in economic need, undocumented migrants, children in problematic families, are among those who are particularly vulnerable to the traffickers. The anti-trafficking actions of the governments need to address these socio-economic factors that create an environment conducive to trafficking activities. The preventive legislative measures need to target marginalized communities and vulnerable groups, aiming to diminish the vulnerability to trafficking and develop alternatives to the exploitation or demand for cheap labour services.
23. In the process of introducing new laws in the field of human trafficking, the state authorities regularly monitor their proper implementation and observe the implementation of the already existing measures, norms, and regulations. It should be noted that there are significant regional variations in the countries' compliance with the international standards, which constitutes a serious challenge in combating human trafficking. In order to provide the effective adaptation of the relevant legislation, continuous oversight and evaluation are required. A suitable mechanism is needed for ensuring that the corresponding legal and administrative provisions are implemented. In this regard, the role of the parliamentarians is vital in guiding more effective anti-trafficking policies. The various possible models that legislators can use to achieve this purpose, include a national rapporteur's office, parliamentary committees and hearings and ministerial task forces.
24. The legislative measures against the crime of human trafficking consist of objectives related to the effective and long-term counteracting of this phenomenon and its consequences. The prevention, protection of human rights of victims and the prosecution of traffickers, are the main pillars of every legislative regulation in the field. They encompass the procedures for identifying the victims of trafficking in human beings, stipulate the victim's assistance (psychological, medical and legal), the punishment of the offenders, provide a framework for cooperation between the state institutions and the relevant authorities engaged in trafficking in human beings, as well as the establishment of specialized mechanisms and institutions for counteraction. The institutional framework has several objectives, mainly referring to monitoring and assessing anti-trafficking activities; assistance granted to victims; coordination of victims during the criminal procedure; cooperation with governmental structures, NGOs and the private sector.

25. Despite a robust legal framework on combating trafficking in human beings, only a small number of victims of trafficking receive justice and remedy for the harm they endured. The widening gap between the crime and the scale of the response, remains significant and aggravating. According to the 2020 US Trafficking in Persons Report, there has been 42% decline in the number of prosecution cases between 2015 and 2019 within Europe, while the number of identified victims has risen by over 56%. Consequently, there is a growing disparity between the number of the identified victims and the lower rate of prosecutions. The lack of the harmonization of the legislation and coordination, within the national jurisdictions and the respective anti-trafficking units, creates challenges to the timely resolution of court trials. In this regard, more enhanced coordination between the national authorities engaged in the fight against human trafficking is required for more effective and evidence-based policy making. The establishment of a specialized agency dedicated to combating trafficking in persons, can consolidate information from all different sources (criminal justice system, law enforcement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Border Police, etc.) and promote better coordinated responses.
26. Another aspect of the prosecution process refers to the protection of the rights of the victims of human trafficking. Punishing victims of trafficking for the crimes they commit because of their exploitation undermines their rights and reduces their willingness to report their victimization to the authorities. It also reduces the opportunities to bring traffickers to justice, as the victim's cooperation is the main tool used in many countries, to prosecute the traffickers. As stated by the resolution of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficked persons should not be subject to arrest, charge, detention, prosecution, penalization, or other punishment for the illegal activities that they have committed as a direct consequence of being trafficked.
27. The political instability and insecurity of people in the country of origin are considered to be important political factors that "push" the people to leave their country in pursuit of a more stable political environment. The political uncertainty and conflict situations make the people more vulnerable and exposed to human trafficking. On the other hand, the globalisation, the visa-free regimes for travelling, trigger waves of migration to countries offering higher living standards. Difficult domestic economic conditions force people to search for new job opportunities and sources of a better income, out of their home countries. The governments need to address poverty and the lack of equal opportunities, through investing in people, in education and jobs, as part of systemic solutions pursued in solidarity. Reinforcing social ties and safety nets for households in economic need, addressing economic inequalities resulting from gender discrimination are also preventive measures against traffickers' deceptive strategies.
28. The human trafficking is a nourishing form of transnational organized crime, which poses a serious challenge to the governments and their societies. The revenues from human trafficking are channelled into different criminal activities. Therefore, it constitutes a major threat for the individuals and for the national security of the countries. Consequently, the increased organized crime weakens the state and affects the principles of the rule of law.
29. In this regard, the countries have to strengthen their political will in further preventing and combating human trafficking, and also to enhance the enforcement of the existing legal instruments in this sphere. They have to create comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies and measures and provide full assistance for their proper implementation. In addition, particular importance should be granted to the bilateral and regional partnerships, as well as to initiatives and actions encouraging the development of effective international collaboration in the fight against human trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic calls for a more integrated approach by the states, including measures for proper law-enforcement, establishment of broad range of legal

structures and stricter sanctions, aiming to diminish the human trafficking. All these activities require a strong political will, public support, and a wider involvement of the civil society.

30. The engagement of the NGOs and the local communities represents an important asset for the implementation of effective anti-trafficking measures. They play an important role through awareness raising, research, training, detecting victims of trafficking, providing them with accommodation and other assistance, and supporting them through the criminal justice process. Prevention activities carried out by NGOs include information campaigns, vocational training for women, training teachers and school advisers to recognize those at risk, facilitating women at risk to access employment and career development opportunities.
31. Raising awareness and sharing experiences are also crucial to ensure that cases are identified, criminals brought to justice and the rights of the victims are protected. The education campaigns aimed at ensuring access to rights, promote safer and more equal societies. These efforts need to be accompanied by the development and the wide dissemination of educational materials and by raising awareness campaigns. The authorities at local, national and international levels should promote information campaigns to alert general public and to protect potential victims from traffickers.
32. The international cooperation among the relevant authorities, for combating human trafficking is aimed at identifying, intercepting, prosecuting and preventing this type of criminal activity, in a timely manner. The interaction is carried out via Europol, Interpol and channels, based on bilateral agreements. This cooperation should implement the best practices and effective mechanisms, such as conducting parallel investigations, international police operations, the establishment of Joint Investigation Teams (JIT), participation in international projects and initiatives. Together with dedicated training of multidisciplinary investigation and prosecution units, this multisectoral approach can promote the effective identification and protection of victims.
33. Furthermore, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, through their consular missions abroad, provide the necessary assistance to the victims of trafficking in human beings. Together with the police attachés at the embassies, they work for the timely issuance of identity documents, for their placement in specialized protected centres, for the provision of appropriate psychological assistance in the country where they have been identified as victims. They assist in the organization of the safe return of the victims to their country of origin, mainly in partnership with the International Organization for Migration.

Situation in the BSEC Member States

34. The Criminal Code of *the Republic of Albania* punishes the recruitment, transportation or reception of persons through the use of force, for the purpose of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or similar forms of enslavement, the use or transplantation of organs, as well as other forms of exploitation, both inside and outside the territory of the Republic of Albania. To address this issue, the UNICEF Albania initiated a proactive and direct engagement with the most-at risk communities, duty bearers, professional groups and civil society partners. The intervention aims to increase the preventive measures for people at risk of trafficking. This initiative will be implemented in four municipalities: Shkodra, Tirana, Diber and Kukes and will target children, parents, young people and front line workers.
35. The Modern Slavery programme in Albania will help reintegrate victims back into society and provide support to individuals at risk of falling into the hands of criminals who seek to exploit the vulnerable. Through this programme they will provide training and support to 250 professionals from the law enforcement and justice sectors. By working with the Albanian government, the

UNICEF raises the awareness and opposes all the forms of criminal exploitations, safeguarding human rights and dignity.

36. The Action Plan, which is an integral part of the Strategy against Human Trafficking, covers the following areas of the socio-economic reintegration of women and girls, victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking: a) economic empowerment, i.e. property rights; employment; and vocational training; b) housing; c) education; and d) social care services. The National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons (2018–2020) ensures the identification and referral for the protection of child victims and potential victims of human trafficking, in accordance with standard operating procedures. It increases the use of Child Protection Units, police and border controls to identify victims, including homeless children. It raises public awareness of all forms of human trafficking, including forced labour. The Action Plan for the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Female Victims of Trafficking (2018–2020) increases the resources available to victims and attempts to reintegrate female trafficking victims by providing education and social services to combat future forced labour and human trafficking.
37. ***The Republic of Armenia*** ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, on 14 April 2008. In order to monitor the level of implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Armenia, two full stages of assessment have been carried out, the third is in process. The Expert Group (GRETA) has published two assessment reports. Referring to the national legislation, Article 132 of the Criminal Code envisages the human trafficking or exploitation as a criminal activity. In addition to the criminal justice system, victims of trafficking or exploitation can be identified and assisted.
38. The main legal act of human trafficking in the Republic of Armenia, is the Law on Trafficking in Persons, Identifying and Providing Assistance to Exploited Persons. The law regulates the process of guiding persons suspected of trafficking (or) exploitation, collecting and sharing information about them, identifying them as victims or special category victims, providing protection and assistance. The anti-trafficking policy has been defined in the national program. The current program was approved on 4 June 2020. The activities foreseen by the national program refer to 2020-2022. The Council for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings consists of senior government officials specialized in this area. Its purpose is to determine the main directions of combating human trafficking and human exploitation in the Republic of Armenia, as well as the general coordination and monitoring of the work carried out in this area, by the state administration, local self-government and other bodies. A working group has been established to organize the current work of the council.
39. A partner nongovernmental organization cooperates with the state administration and local self-government bodies of the Republic of Armenia, under a memorandum of understanding signed by the Council. The Commission for the Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Persons is the only administrative body authorized to recognize a person as a victim or a special category of victim. The “Approval of the Procedure for National Governance of Persons/Victims of Human Trafficking” defined by the Government Decree No. 1385-A, of 20 November 2008, refers to the identification of victims of trafficking or exploitation as a chronological prelude to referral, as well as identification and assistance as follow-up actions. The procedure for granting protection is established by the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On approval of the procedure for granting protection, provided for victims of human trafficking”, dated 29 October 2015.
40. In 2020, the president of ***the Republic of Azerbaijan*** Mr. Ilham Aliyev signed an order approving the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking for 2020-2024. According to the order, in order to ensure the sustainability of anti-trafficking activities, improve the regulatory framework and institutional mechanisms, strengthen the interaction of state structures and ensure compliance

with Azerbaijan's international obligations in this area, the National Action Plan in Azerbaijan to combat human trafficking for 2020-2024 has been approved.

41. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan coordinates with the relevant state structures the implementation of the activities envisaged in the National Action Plan in Azerbaijan to combat human trafficking for 2020-2024. Every year the National Coordinator for Combating Human Trafficking provides a report in the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on its activities and presents proposals for improving the situation in this field. In the Republic of Azerbaijan has been established a legislative framework to effectively combat human trafficking crimes and expand the protection of victims' rights.
42. In the fight against human trafficking, the government has taken a number of important decisions, and the assistance to those affected by these crimes has been raised from 400 (\$235) to 700 (\$410) manats. Every year, extensive education campaigns have been carried out in the fight against human trafficking. Workshops to combat human trafficking and forced labour have been held in 55 cities and districts of the country, universities and colleges. Despite the situation with the coronavirus pandemic, the internal affairs authorities hold regular online seminars and courses dedicated to the issue. In the area of human trafficking, the focus has been on strengthening mutual ties with foreign partners and organizations. In 2019-2020, more than 100 treaties were signed with respective state structures of about 40 countries.
43. ***The Republic of Bulgaria*** is a party to all major international agreements in the field of trafficking in human beings. It has ratified the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2017-2021 is a major policy document that formulates the priorities and the objectives related to the effective and long-term counteracting of the trafficking in human beings and its consequences. The National Mechanism for Referral and Support of Trafficked Persons – creates rules and procedures for identifying the victims of trafficking in human beings; assesses the risk to them and provides victim support services (psychological, medical and legal assistance); provides a framework for cooperation between the state institutions and the NGOs, in their handling of cases of trafficking in human beings.
44. A network of Employment and Social Affairs Services (ESAS) has been established in the European countries with the largest Bulgarian communities: Austria, Switzerland, Greece, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Ireland, Spain, Germany. It aims at achieving the successful implementation of the policy of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of free movement of workers and the related coordination of the social security systems in the EU, the management of labour migration and the protection of the interests of the Bulgarian citizens in these areas. The General Directorate Combating Organised Crime (GDCOC) is the main police structure in the Ministry of Interior, with competence in the fight trafficking in human beings, in all its forms. Its activity is aimed primarily at identifying and neutralizing the activities of local and transnational organised criminal groups involved in trafficking in human beings. The General Directorate “Border Police” relies on active professional training of the employees working on combating trafficking in human beings.
45. The trafficking in human beings is one of the priorities of the EU Policy Cycle to Fight Serious and International Organised Crime. The EU Member States coordinate and conduct joint actions at national and international level. In November 2020, the administration of the National Commission hosted an online Regional Expert Group Meeting (REGM): “Facilitating Cooperation between the Public and Private Sector in Combating Trafficking in Persons in South

Eastern Europe”, implemented by UNODC and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

46. Combating Trafficking in Human Beings remains one of the key priorities of the Government of **Georgia**. Adequate legislative framework is in place since 2003 when it was explicitly criminalized under Criminal Code of Georgia. The Law on Combating Trafficking in human beings was adopted in 2006 aiming at preventing human trafficking, protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers. The law was amended in accordance with the recommendation of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) in April 2012. In particular, new chapter inserted in the Law refers to the social and legal protection, assistance and rehabilitation of the child (statutory) victims.
47. Combating trafficking requires concerted interagency policy in implementation of the law. In this respect the role of the Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in human beings (Council) set up in 2006 remains indispensable in adopting sustainable measures on combating human trafficking. The Council chaired by the Minister of Justice of Georgia is the major policy shaper body with regard to combating trafficking and includes representatives from all line ministries and agencies. In every two years Council elaborates, approves and monitors the National Action Plans on Combatting Trafficking in human beings.
48. Georgia is party to number of international legal instruments in the fields of police/law enforcement cooperation and cooperation in the fight against crime, which also envisage cooperation in fight against Human Trafficking. Georgia has already concluded international agreements on cooperation in the field of combating crime and police cooperation with the 33 countries, including BSEC Member states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova and Romania. Georgia is the member state to the following international legal instruments, which regulate the issues related to Trafficking in Human Beings: Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, ILO Forced Labour Convention (N29), ILO Convention on Abolition of Forced Labour (N105), ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour (N182) etc.
49. **The Hellenic Republic** has stepped up the efforts to fight trafficking in human beings, through the introduction of three pivotal legal instruments: 1) the ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol (the Palermo Protocol), 2) the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and 3) the transposition of the anti-trafficking EU Directive. In accordance with the Victims of Crime Directive 2012/29/EU, transposed with the Law 4478/17, a variety of provisions are in place such as: granting a reflection period and a residence permit to victims formally identified by the Prosecutor, non-punishment provision for victims involvement in unlawful actions, to the extent they were compelled to do so, free access to public health services, the right to claim a compensation, protection of victims of trafficking giving testimony, protection of unaccompanied and separated minors of migration, providing the option of voluntary return to the countries of origin and assisting the victim during the repatriation process.
50. The Hellenic Republic cooperates closely with various UN bodies such as the UNICEF, the UNODC, the IOM, as well as with the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe. In January 2021, it signed with the Republic of Albania, a bilateral agreement on the establishment and operation of a Joint Contact Center for Police and Customs Cooperation, in Kakavia border crossing point. This security center enables the exchange of information and the coordination in the spheres of human trafficking, illegal migration and other forms of organized crime. The development of a more inclusive framework of partnerships is a top priority for the Office of the

National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (ONR). This involves local/regional authorities, private sector stakeholders, other states, as well as competent international organizations (GRETA/Council of Europe, OSCE, UNODC, IOM).

51. In the effort to raise the general awareness of the society against human trafficking, a special emphasis is placed on education. The ONR has initiated a project titled “Human Rights for Beginners”, in collaboration with the Council of Europe and the Greek Ministry of Education. The ONR coordinates and supervises the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the identification and referral of victims of human trafficking. The ONR is currently working closely with KEMEA (Centre for Security Studies of Hellenic Police) to organize, in cooperation with the OSCE, a regional simulation-based exercise on the protection of unaccompanied minors. The simulation training will promote the involvement of the NRMs of the participating countries and will contribute to the specialized training of prosecutors and the judiciary in matters relating to the successful investigation of perpetrators, etc.
52. **The Republic of Moldova** has ratified the Convention of the Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which entered into force on 1 February 2008. Additionally, the Republic of Moldova adhered to other international instruments in this field: UN Convention against transnational organised crime and the Additional Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, the Convention of the Council of Europe on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.
53. The Coordinating Council of the legal bodies with responsibilities in the field of combating human trafficking, was founded under the Office of the Prosecutor General. It is an advisory inter-department body whose tasks are to consolidate the efforts of legal bodies with responsibilities in the field of combating human trafficking, to set goals and undertake concerted measures, in order to prevent and fight it as well as to ensure the uniform enforcement of the legislation in this field, by the respective bodies, within their competences. The National Strategy for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for 2018-2023, aims at incorporating the strategic objectives of the state in the fight against trafficking in human beings, harmonising and strengthening the efforts of competent and interested institutions/organisations.
54. Referring to the international legal cooperation, within the criminal cases regarding human trafficking and the related crimes, led by the prosecutors from the Anti-Trafficking and Cybercrime Investigation Bureau of the Prosecutor’s Office on Combating Organised Crimes and Special Cases, a joint investigation team was established with the relevant authorities of Romania, on 29 November 2018. During 2019, the Theseus international operation was carried out by Interpol, during which several criminal investigation actions were held, based on the Agreement for the Establishment of the Joint Investigation Team (of 12 November 2018), between the Prosecutor’s Office on Combating Organised Crimes and Special Cases and Romania, on a case of organising an illegal migration, which led to arrests in both states.
55. The fight against trafficking in human beings is a priority for **Romania**, as an integral part of the European Union and the international community. In 2007, the National Mechanism for the Identification and Referral of Victims in Trafficking in Persons was established, with the aim to adopt a common and integrated response by all the institutions and organizations. In 2018-2019, the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP) implemented the “Project Persons Trafficking – an approach towards the victim”, in partnership with the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, the General Inspectorate for Immigrations, the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

56. The strategic concept applied by the ANITP for preventing human trafficking, followed the transposition, to the largest extent possible, of the general international and European approach into anti-trafficking efforts in Romania. Furthermore, the ANITP aims to meet intervention needs identified by means of various national strategic documents (The National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons for 2018-2022, (“SNITP”), The National Action Plan 2018-2020 for implementing SNITP 2018-2022, The National Strategy for Public Order and Safety 2015-2020, etc.). The activity of prevention is focused on increasing the level of awareness of the population regarding the implications of human trafficking, by means of implementing projects, and by information campaigns devoted mainly to vulnerable target groups, as well as to the population in its entirety.
57. The cross-institutional cooperation is implemented through the 114 meetings of the county anti-trafficking cross-institutional teams that were organized and through the training sessions organized in the ANITP regional centres. Their purpose is to increase institutional or organizational involvement in combating human trafficking, while the activity of the ANITP regional centres included the organization and performance of 319 training sessions for experts encountering victims/possible victims of human trafficking. About 9,500 specialists were trained or informed through these sessions. This type of activity peaks a real interest for the partner institutions or organizations, a fact also reflected in the number of beneficiary specialists, which is increasing, as compared to the past years.
58. The anti-trafficking legislation on human trafficking of *the Russian Federation* consists of federal norms, regional norms, for example, within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and international documents ratified by Russia. In 1996, the Criminal Code was adopted, which envisaging punishment for trafficking in children (article 152). In December 2003, two articles were included criminalizing the human beings trafficking (Article 127.1) and the use of slave labour (Article 127.2) in the Russian Federation. In 2004 the Federal Law No. 119-FZ of "The State Protection of Victims, Witnesses and Other Participants of Criminal Proceedings" entered into force. The further improvement of the Russian legislation in this area continued in 2000.
59. Russia is a party to fundamental international legal instruments on human trafficking. Among them are: the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1948); Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956); The ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999); The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its supplementing Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000). The Russian Federation signed (in 2012) and ratified (in 2013) the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000). In October 2015, Russia submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child an initial report on the Russian Federation's compliance with the Provisions of the Optional Protocol.
60. At regional level, the priority of Russian Federation remains strengthening the cooperation within the CIS in this area. The Concept of Cooperation of the State Parties of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Fight Against Human Trafficking, approved at the highest level in 2014, constitutes its legal basis. Interstate Program of Joint Measures to Combat Crime in the CIS for 2019-2023, approved by the CIS Council of Heads of State on 28 September 2018, also operates in the framework of the CIS. The Programme envisages measures to combat crime in its various

forms, including trafficking of human beings. The development and use of Joint Data Bank of the Security Bodies and Special Services of CIS Member States on combat organized crime aims at: effective information-sharing and cooperation in combating human trafficking; exchange of information used in media and the Internet on illegal migration and human trafficking; awareness of citizens about threats of becoming potential victims of trafficking; holding of scientific practical conferences, as well as training of professionals in contact with the victims of such crimes.

61. **The Republic of Serbia** is a party of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings (since 2009). The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted a revised Action Plan for Chapter 24, in July 2020, which envisages the implementation of the activity “Appointment of a National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Institution of the Protector of Citizens”, in 2021. The adoption of a new Law on the Protector of Citizens, which would, *inter alia*, establish the capacity of the Office of the Protector of Citizens to independently monitor activities in the fight against trafficking, especially with a focus on the rights of victims of trafficking and human rights, would significantly improve the legal framework for the fight against trafficking in human beings.
62. The Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is the most important state body for combating trafficking in human beings, at the strategic level. The Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings, particularly women and children, and victim protection (2017–2022), pays a special attention to children who are the subject to trafficking in human beings. The Strategy aims to ensure respect for and protection of human rights, a continuous comprehensive response of the society through an improved system of prevention, assistance and protection of victims, the timely identification of cases in practice and the efficient prosecution of perpetrators. It should also ensure the suppression of trafficking in human beings through a functional networking and an institutional capacity building of all the entities in the governmental and civil sectors, in line with the dynamics of the new challenges, risks and threats. In this respect, the Strategy envisages five specific goals which strengthen the partnership in response to human trafficking, improve prevention, improve the proactive system for detecting cases of human trafficking, improve the identification and support of victims of human trafficking and protect children from trafficking and exploitation through pornography and prostitution.
63. The cooperation with countries in the region is continuously realised through the Network of Coordinators for Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeast Europe – “Hill of Process”. On 16 December 2019, it was signed the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, on cooperation in the field of combating human trafficking which is the first such agreement signed by the Republic of Serbia. Also, international cooperation in the fight against trafficking in human beings is realised through the implementation of projects of international donors, which provide support for capacity building, in the fight against human trafficking and the accomplishment of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children and to protect victims, for the period 2017-2022.
64. **The Republic of Turkey** is among the first countries which signed the Palermo Protocol, in 2000 and incorporated it into its national legislation, in 2003. The country is also a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The arrangements of that Convention have been applied to the national legislation with the Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims, which entered into force on 16 March 2016. The

Regulation identifies the following aspects of the human trafficking: procedures and principles regarding identification procedures without distinction, between Turkish nationals and foreign victims, the period of reflection to be given to the foreign victim of human trafficking, the conditions of residence permit, the procedures and principles regarding the functioning of the national Commission authorized to determine policies in the fight against human trafficking, rights and services to be granted to the victims, voluntary and safe return, training and awareness activities in this field, health services to be provided to victims and access of victims to the labour market.

65. To fulfill its obligations under the international law to which the Republic of Turkey is party to and to get the maximum efficiency, it improves and updates the national legislation. In connection with various aspects of the subject, legislation on migration, labour law, health, protection of children and other issues have been revised, taking this fact into consideration. With the revision of the mentioned legislation in terms of combating human trafficking crime, the fight against human trafficking has shifted from the judicial area to the preventive area. With these initiatives, Turkey has become a country that approaches the prevention of human trafficking proactively, not reactively. Turkey's legislation in the field of human trafficking, includes the following legislative acts: the Penal Code of Turkey; Law on Foreigners and International Protection; International Labour Law; Implementing Regulation of the Law on Work Permit of Foreigners; Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and the Protection of Victims.
66. The Republic of Turkey has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with the BSEC Member States, as follows: Protocol between the Republic of Turkey and Georgia on the "Implementation of the Ninth Article of the Agreement on Combating Terrorism, Organized Crime and Other Major Crimes, between the Republic of Turkey, Georgia and the Republic of Azerbaijan", signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Georgia, on 10 March 2005; Additional Protocol on the "Implementation of the First Article of Cooperation Agreement against Crime between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and Government of Ukraine", signed by the Ministers of Interior, on 7 July 2005; "Protocol on Cooperation in the Field of Human Trafficking, under the Cooperation Agreement on Illicit Drugs Trafficking, International Terrorism and Other Organized Crimes, between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Moldova", signed by the Ministers of Interior, on 8 February 2006.
67. **Ukraine** ratified the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) in 2004 and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, in 2010. The main directions of the state policy on combating human trafficking are enshrined in the Law of Ukraine "On combating human trafficking". The Government of Ukraine is constantly carrying out the appropriate work to strengthen the state control in the field of combating human trafficking. The State Social Program of Counteracting Trafficking in Persons, for the Period until 2020, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, No. 111, dated 24 February 2016, provides for an Action plan to prevent trafficking in persons.
68. The main activities envisaged in the Action plan include: strengthening the effectiveness of the interaction among executive authorities, international organizations, public associations and other legal entities performing various functions in the field of combating trafficking in persons; increasing the level of professional competence of the employees of the state authorities, in particular, in the law enforcement and judicial systems; increasing the level of public confidence in the law enforcement and judicial systems; introducing an effective mechanism for referring victims of trafficking in persons, by the bodies of the National Police, to the responsible structural units, for further assistance; implementing measures to minimize the level of human trafficking.

69. In order to minimize the spread of human trafficking, efforts are consolidated at regional and interdepartmental levels, by strengthening the international cooperation and introducing the best practices. To combat trafficking in human beings, international technical assistance has been provided by the US Government, the Government of Canada and the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine. In the framework of the international technical assistance, victims of trafficking in persons have been provided with medical and psychological rehabilitation and reintegration. National and regional institutions for child protection services have conducted different trainings on identification and referral of child victims of trafficking. Such initiatives have been also organized for law enforcement officials (investigators, prosecutors and judges), at national and regional levels.

The Role of Parliaments in Preventing Human Trafficking

70. The national parliaments have an important role to play in the fight against trafficking in human beings, as they create the political and legislative climate for the successful development and implementation of anti-trafficking measures. The parliaments ratify international instruments related to trafficking in human beings, as well as bilateral and multilateral agreements, in order to protect, assist and repatriate victims of trafficking. The parliamentarians ensure the compliance with the international legal framework to combat trafficking in persons and review the existing laws to ensure the consistency and conformity of the national legislation with the international conventions.

71. The anti-trafficking legislation, covering all the aspects of trafficking, their permanent revision and application, provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the problem of trafficking in human beings. Legislators review the existing codes through the prism of an effort to combat trafficking in a multidisciplinary way and initiate the actions towards amending any legislation that may be in contradiction with the spirit of anti-trafficking initiatives. Crime prevention and reduction of vulnerability are effective approaches to preventing and combating human trafficking.

72. The parliamentary Committees on human rights aim to oversee and guide the government policies on the protection of trafficking victims. In this regard, they need to further intensify their monitoring activities in regions or cities where there is a risk, especially in terms of labour and sexual exploitation and to initiate the development of preventive policies. The parliamentarians must ensure that the human rights of trafficked victims are in the center of all their efforts. The human rights approach has to be reflected in the existing procedural codes, aiming to protect the security and privacy of the victims' witnesses. Granting early support to presumed victims and upholding the principle of non-punishment, play a key role in this endeavor.

73. The parliaments may consider leveraging the existing national coordination mechanisms to allow for appropriate information sharing among relevant actors, enabling joint efforts to prosecute crimes, and promoting a uniform understanding of how to implement existing legislation. It should encompass actors from law enforcement, prosecution authorities and the judiciary, as well as border and victim assistance units, as their specialized knowledge can help identify instances of human trafficking. These groups should meet on a regular basis and be given the mandate to create countermeasures for each specific case. A better training of law-enforcement and healthcare workers leads to greater detection and enhanced support.

74. The parliaments can assist in organizing information campaigns targeting the relevant groups and address the specific needs of extremely vulnerable groups exposed to trafficking. Public awareness campaigns are helpful, not only in informing the public about the dangers of trafficking in persons and the signs that help recognize it, but also in rescuing those who may have already

fallen victim to trafficking, particularly by alerting people who may come into contact with the potential victims and the general public.

75. The parliamentarians must strengthen the legislative environment to discourage the demand for human trafficking, in order to achieve an effective discouragement. Improvement of the fundamental labour principles and standards should be both reflected and applied in the national legislation, monitored, and routinely enforced, covering all forms of employment.
76. The role of the parliaments is of an utmost importance in the promotion of broad accountability and transparency of the government institutions, by engaging in regular evaluations of the governance, with the participation of both governmental and non-governmental actors. Consultations with anti-corruption ombudspersons, task forces, commissions, auditing agencies, concerned international organizations and the civil society, to monitor the levels of corruption in the country, in connection with trafficking in persons, are necessary, to keep the government activities transparent.
77. The parliaments provide support to joint projects within the BSEC countries, the establishment of contact points in the BSEC Member States, to coordinate and support the cooperation between the police services in their work, on cases of trafficking in human beings. The establishment of joint prevention activities, for the victims, according to the specific needs and characteristics of the countries of origin, transit and destination, through Joint Investigation Teams, is an effective approach. Upgrading the capacity of the specialists by organising joint forums and training sessions to share practices and experience and to create a contact between the specialists, is a practical example for a fruitful cooperation in this field.
78. The parliamentarians have an important role in initiating negotiations with a view to signing bilateral agreements and different forms of cooperation in the field of combating trafficking in human beings. For this purpose, the members of the PABSEC may consider the possibility of establishing a Parliamentary Network for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, modelled on similar parliamentary networks, to ensure continuity in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

79. Trafficking in human beings touches upon several areas of governmental policy, including those on legislative, political, judicial, economic and social spheres. It is one of the most serious crimes against human freedom and dignity, remaining a threat to the security and the sustainable development of the countries. It continuously expands and due to the high profits, the criminal groups become increasingly involved in these actions. Additionally, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis has further increased the vulnerabilities, due to school closures and a rise in the unemployment rates, mostly affecting women and young people. Rising poverty and fewer opportunities in the pandemic economic downturn threaten to increase the share of the potential victims of human trafficking.
80. As countries of origin, transit or destination, trafficking in human beings affects all the BSEC Member States and is a serious challenge for their governments and societies. It remains one of the most significant priorities on their national agenda. It is important to carry out the coordination and harmonization of strategies, action plans and other anti-trafficking measures, allowing their simultaneous implementation, thus restricting its further spread and better elimination.
81. The patterns of the human traffickers continuously progress and adapt to the changing legislative environment, incorporating increasingly in their methods, the new technologies, the internet, and the media. In this regard, the counter-trafficking response needs a similar adjustment. The

innovative character of these criminal networks requires more efforts and better policy measures for effective, permanent and functional response.

82. Joint preventive measures and initiatives of the governments, civil societies, NGOs and specialized agencies in the field, can enhance the policymaking and improve the effectiveness of their efforts and strategies. To be effective, the measures for preventing the human trafficking must encompass a multi-disciplinary approach combining the prevention, protection of human rights of victims and the prosecution of traffickers.
83. The parliaments of the BSEC Member States play an important role in developing the legislative base to assist in proper law enforcement, promotion of judicial improvement, encouragement of transparency and oversight and strengthening the public awareness. They ensure the compliance of the relevant national legislation with the existing international legal instruments in the field of human trafficking. The BSEC Member States have successfully established effective mechanisms for preventing trafficking in human beings, through the adoption of legislation regulating the prosecution of the traffickers, the mechanisms for crime prevention and defining the procedures for assistance and protection of the victims of trafficking in human beings.
84. The international cooperation is critical for the handling of the human trafficking cases across borders and enabling information sharing among the anti-organized crime agencies, labour inspectors, civil society organizations, police officers, prosecutors and members of the judiciary. Establishing a close cooperation within these units enables the quick granting of mutual assistance in a timely manner. The governments should further enhance their collaboration to streamline the system of transmission of requests for international cooperation and transfer of procedures, to conduct systematic bilateral meetings between the countries of origin, transit and destination, and periodically evaluate the multilateral efforts to adjust the international response.
85. Through intensive regional and international cooperation among the governments and the parliaments, the BSEC Member States have to take a stronger stand against human trafficking and contribute to the common global effort to combat this phenomenon. Systematizing cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships, fostering collaboration and dialogue among the governments and the parliaments of the BSEC Member States, have become a priority in the common anti-trafficking response.