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CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

REPORT*

“The Role of Parliaments in Preventing Human Trafficking - Social Aspects”

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Trafficking in human beings poses a serious threat to all peoples and states, especially today, when because of prolonged pandemic all the problems acquire a different dimension. Human trafficking undermines the rule of law and poses a threat to fundamental human rights. Human trafficking is common in all countries - developed and less developed, prosperous or affected by conflicts and wars. The main reason people end up in traffickers' networks is poverty. Often, due to a lack of funds to meet basic needs, unstable earnings, unemployment, inability to feed a family, a person is forced to agree to any working conditions. People become objects of manipulation, they are transported by force or deception, forced to work, and deprived of freedom of movement.
2. Every year thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, both domestically and beyond the national borders. All countries in the world, whether it is a country of origin, transit or destination, suffer from this fastest growing and most profitable illegal business. Statistics from a wide variety of sources point to an increasing trend in human trafficking despite the strict measures taken by individual states and the international community.
3. It is within the power of parliaments and parliamentarians to prevent trafficking in persons by raising public awareness and enacting the laws necessary to prosecute traffickers and protect the rights of victims. The role of parliaments is also important in strengthening the fight against the crime of human trafficking at the international level.
4. Given the fact that the problem of preventing human trafficking is currently under focus of both the scientific circles and the system of international relations, the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee decided to discuss the topic "The Role of Parliaments in Preventing Human Trafficking - Social Aspects". The Report is submitted to the Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the Committee and the Fifty-Seventh Plenary Session of the General Assembly.
5. The Report contains an overview of the situation in the countries of the BSEC region in the fight against human trafficking in order to identify differences in approaches, exchange experience and assess the potential for further cooperation. The document outlines the responses countries are currently taking and makes recommendations for seizing opportunities to restore and construct stronger social relations. The Report also highlights the need for more effective cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.
6. The Report includes the information provided by the national delegations of Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. The necessary additional reference material was obtained by the PABSEC International Secretariat from the website of the United Nations institutions, as well as from other relevant Internet sources and publications.

II. THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING - SOCIAL ASPECTS

7. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), approximately 40.3 million people are victims of trafficking, including 24.9 million victims of forced labour and 15.4 million victims of forced marriage. Of the 24.9 million victims of forced labour, 16 million are in the private sector doing domestic work, construction or agriculture, and 4.8 million are

victims of sexual exploitation. Five out of every thousand persons worldwide are victims of human trafficking.

8. In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 30 June as “World Day against Trafficking in Human Beings”, which is celebrated annually. Thus, the UN has drawn the attention of the international community to the need to raise awareness of governments and citizens about the situation of victims of trafficking, develop solutions that can address root causes and risk factors, prosecute offenders, protect vulnerable and support victims.
9. The specialized structures of the UN system systematically collect and analyse data on trafficking in persons. According to statistics, since 2003, the number of people convicted per 100,000 population has nearly tripled, and every year more and more traffickers are brought to justice. The existence of international legal instruments and national anti-trafficking legislation, as well as investments in national capacities and international cooperation, reinforce the response.
10. In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol), which entered into force at the end of 2003. The Protocol is the first global instrument aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in persons, providing protection and assistance to victims and promoting cooperation between countries to combat this type of crime. Currently, 178 countries are parties to the Protocol (all BSEC member states have ratified this document), however, despite the high political commitment, the implementation of the Protocol is still very uneven.
11. Paragraph 4 of Article 9 of the Protocol calls on States parties to take or strengthen measures, including through bilateral or multilateral cooperation, to alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity. Paragraph 5 notes that States Parties shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking. These appeals are especially topical today, when all countries are experiencing difficulties in overcoming the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
12. Considering that human trafficking is carried out for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, trafficking in organ, the legal norms on combating human trafficking are enshrined in such international agreements as: The United Nations Slavery Convention; The Supplementary United Nations Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery; The International Labour Organization Forced Labour Convention; The International Labour Organization Abolition of Forced Labour Convention; The International Labour Organization Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; The United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; The United Nations International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries; The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and

Sexual Abuse. These international instruments are the foundation for the formation of national legislation to combat trafficking in persons.

13. It should be noted that the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (all BSEC member states except Russia have ratified this document) has a broader application than the Palermo Protocol and the UN Convention, as it applies to all forms of human trafficking at national and international level, whether or not linked to organized crime. The norms of the Council of Europe Convention minimize obstacles and facilitate the free and rapid dissemination of information between countries of origin, transit and destination for the timely detention of traffickers, release of victims of human trafficking and providing the necessary rehabilitation assistance.
14. Men, women and children move around the world in the hope of a better life and secure future. Many of these trips are organized by smugglers, who take advantage of existing threats and vulnerabilities of people, putting them at significant risk of violence. Sometimes people do not even realize that they have become victims of criminals, that their rights have been violated, and that they are subjected to servitude. The victims are increasingly identified as trafficked domestically without crossing the international borders. Also, a separate type of crime is illegal transplantation of organs and tissues. Trafficking patterns and flows are changing - and they will probably change the most today, amid the unprecedented socio-economic crisis caused by the pandemic.
15. In modern society, the problem of illegal migration is also very acute. Finding themselves in an illegal position in a foreign country, people are unable to resist the influence of the criminals involved in human trafficking. Documents are taken from migrants, forced to work for free or for food, they are beaten, abused, killed. The use of slave labour is one of the most widespread forms of human trafficking in the world. Criminal networks use opportunities to get illegal proceeds at the expense of states and people. Organized criminal groups are very skilled in taking advantage of the gaps in legislation and their enforcement.
16. After 20 years of the adoption of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, a large number of countries have criminalized human trafficking. At the national level, countries continue to implement the provisions of international instruments and are working to incorporate anti-trafficking provisions into their domestic legislation. Improvements are underway in many countries through the introduction of special legislation, as well as the setting up of special police units to combat human trafficking and the development of national action plans. However, there is a need to improve the effectiveness of measures at the national level and to expand regional and international cooperation.
17. In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, which defines collective efforts to combat trafficking in persons and mandates the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to regularly provide a comprehensive analysis of the crime of trafficking in persons and how countries respond to it. The UNODC, as the guarantor of compliance with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, assists the states in their efforts to implement the Protocol to Prevent and Suppress Trafficking in Persons. Every two years, UNODC publishes the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, which is compiled from the information of the member states and serves as a basis for assessing the situation and determining further action at the national, regional and international levels. The latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 shows the magnitude of the crime. Trafficking routes spread all over the

world, crossing all the countries. In criminal trafficking usually involves the representatives of the most vulnerable groups of the population, including migrants and the unemployed. Half of all victims are bought for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 38 percent for forced labour, 6 percent for forced engagement in criminal activities, and about 1 percent for begging. Less than one percent is used for organ trafficking, forced marriage and other purposes.

18. In 2016, the initiative GLO.ACT was launched with the participation of the European Union and UNODC, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to strengthen the global response to human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. The GLO.ACT implementation strategy envisages a multidisciplinary approach that addresses human trafficking and smuggling of migrants within several areas including migration, labour and social policy. The project focuses on creating the framework that states need to effectively address these challenges and ensure sustainable long-term strategies.
19. Human trafficking cannot be counteracted through crime prevention and prosecution measures alone. Only criminalisation of human trafficking is not enough, it is equally important to reconsider and amend the labour, healthcare and child protection laws and to create a comprehensive legal framework to address the root causes. States need to take steps to build a comprehensive framework aimed at preventing human trafficking and protecting victims. It is important to take measures to address the factors contributing to the spread of trafficking in order to reduce the vulnerability of citizens.
20. Legislation, policies, strategies and action plans in the field of combating human trafficking in the BSEC Member States are becoming more comprehensive. One of the key priorities in this regard is the practical implementation of international obligations. Measures to improve social protection and transform social norms are central to the efforts of governments, civil society and other stakeholders to implement national laws, strategies and plans, including also raising public awareness. The measures are being developed to effectively counteract human trafficking, combat criminality and support victims.
21. The BSEC Member States for the first time drew attention to the problem of human trafficking within the framework of the signing of the “Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Member States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its Organized Forms” in 1998. More general provisions were formulated in the policy document of the Organization “The BSEC Economic Agenda - Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership” (2012) within the framework of Goal 16 “Combating Organized Crime, Illegal Trafficking of Drugs and Weapons, Terrorism, Corruption and Money Laundering”. The BSEC Working Group on Combating Crime, in particular in its Organized Forms, works to strengthen cooperation between the BSEC Member States in the field of combating organized crime, including human trafficking. At present, the Working Group is discussing the issue of preparing a Regional Action Plan to strengthen criminal responsibility for crimes in the field of human trafficking. However, due to the low involvement of individual countries in providing relevant information and specific proposals, this work has not yet been completed.

Situation in the BSEC Member States

22. The fight against human trafficking in the **Republic of Armenia** began in October 2002, when, by the decision of the Prime Minister, an Inter-Agency Commission was established to study the issues related to illegal transportation and trafficking in human beings, as well as

submit its proposals. The Commission operates under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and includes the representatives of all respective ministries and departments, experts from the National Assembly and the Government of the Republic of Armenia, as well as representatives of civil organizations. In order to increase the level of efficiency of the activities carried out, in accordance with the Decree N861-A of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia dated 6 December 2007, the Council to Combat Human Trafficking was established, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, who is at the same time the Minister of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia. The members of the Council are the relevant ministers and officials from government structures.

23. In order to organize the activities of the Council for Combating Human Trafficking, an interdepartmental Working Group was established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. This Working Group is subordinated to the Council for Combating Human Trafficking and is chaired by the Director of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Non-governmental and international organizations working in the field of combating human trafficking, as well as social partners, actively participate in the activities of the Council and the Working Group.
24. To effectively combat human trafficking, the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Concept on “Prevention of Illegal Transportation, Transfer and Trafficking in Human Beings” and adopted and implemented National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking in the Republic of Armenia. The National Referral Procedure of Trafficked Persons was approved by the Decree No 1385-A of 28 November 2008 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The provisions on the functioning of the procedure are included in the appendix of the Decree and describe the roles of the relevant state bodies and local authorities in identifying and providing assistance to victims of human trafficking, principles of cooperation between them, principles of victim identification and assistance to victims.
25. The main legal act regulating this area in the Republic of Armenia is the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Identification of and Support to Persons Subjected to Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation. The law regulates the process of guiding persons suspected of trafficking (or) exploitation, guiding them, collecting and sharing information about them, identifying them as victims or victims of a special category, providing protection and support.
26. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was signed by Armenia on 16 May 2005 and entered into force on 1 August 2008. Monitoring of the implementation of the Convention is carried out at two levels: the Committee of the States Parties to the Convention; the Group of Experts on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).
27. The legislation of the **Republic of Bulgaria** provides for an enhanced protection regime for victims of trafficking in persons under the Criminal Code and the Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act. The provision of the necessary and timely support to victims of violence and human trafficking is regulated by the Social Services Act. All social services to support children and people without income, as well as victims of human trafficking, are financed from the state budget.
28. There are many measures and support programs for the victims of trafficking that are part of the National Mechanism for Referral and Support of Trafficked Persons. Specific measures to protect potential or officially identified victims of human trafficking are implemented by

the National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB) and are funded from the state budget. The NCCTHB holds monthly meetings with foreign delegations and representatives of the diplomatic corps in Bulgaria; supports the process of cooperation with foreign missions to organize joint work to combat human trafficking.

29. As of 30 November 2020, there are 25 crises centres for children and adults in the country with 260 places capacity, including 19 centres for children with 196 places and 6 centres for adults with 64 places. These crisis centres operate under the municipalities. They are the main social services providing specialized support to victims of trafficking. There are also centres in the country for the social services for child victims: 21 Centres for street children with 409 places; 53 Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration of Children with 1,827 places; Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration of Children and Youth for 25 places; 13 mothers and baby units for 81 places; 143 community support centres for 5815 places.
30. Activities under the Coordination Mechanism for the Referral, Care and Protection of Repatriated Unaccompanied Minors and Child Victims of Trafficking Returning from Abroad are carried out by the State Agency for the Child Protection together with the Ministry of Interior, which are specialised bodies of the Council of Ministers responsible for coordination and control in the field of child protection.
31. The trafficking in human beings is one of the priorities of the EU policy in the fight against international organized crime. There is a regular coordination in this area and, within the framework of the EU Policy Cycle to Fight Serious and International Organised Crime there is constant contact with the National Expert of the EU General Directorate for Combating Organized Crime (EMPACT THB). In this regard, each year the Member States coordinate and carry out joint actions at the national and international levels.
32. Trafficking in human beings was criminalized in **Georgia** in 2003, when the relevant provisions were introduced into the Criminal Code. On 28 April 2006 the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Law on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. This law establishes the legal and organizational framework for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. The law also defines the legal status of a victim of human trafficking. In the same year, the Parliament of Georgia ratified the Protocol to Prevent and Suppress Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. In 2007, a provision criminalizing the use of the services of victims of human trafficking was added to the Criminal Code of Georgia.
33. The Law on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings defines the powers and responsibilities of government departments, officials and legal entities, as well as the rules for coordinating their activities. The law defines the legal status of victims of trafficking in persons and provides guarantees for their social and legal protection. According to the law, the status of a victim of trafficking in persons can be granted by law enforcement agencies, provided that the person cooperates with law enforcement agencies in the investigation of the alleged case of trafficking in persons. The status can also be granted by the Permanent Task Force under the Interdepartmental Coordination Council for the Implementation of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.
34. By Presidential Decree No 53428 of 1 September 2006, in accordance with Article 10 of the Law of Georgia on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, an Interdepartmental Coordination Council for the Implementation of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings was established. It is chaired by the Minister of Justice. The Coordination Council

includes representatives of the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and Science. This Council coordinates the work on combating human trafficking and is also responsible for preparing recommendations.

35. In accordance with Article 9 of the Law of Georgia on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, a State Fund was established with the aim of effectively carrying out activities aimed at protecting, assisting and rehabilitating victims of human trafficking. State supervision over the activities of the State Fund is carried out by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Protection.
36. The National Action Plan of the **Hellenic Republic** for 2019-2023, drafted by the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (ONR), covers a wide range of policy-making projects that include measures to reduce vulnerability, provide training for professionals, raise public awareness, assisting and reintegrating victims, strengthening gender policies, promoting cooperation between national and international actors and strengthening action against organized crime. The aim of the National Action Plan is to enhance the criminal justice response that will lead to more effective prosecution of perpetrators, ensure the protection of victims, and strengthen coordination and cooperation among stakeholders, both nationally and internationally.
37. The ONR has initiated an ambitious project entitled "Human Rights for Beginners" in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Greek Ministry of Education, which provides for the training of teachers within the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture of the Council of Europe, also including the issue of human trafficking. The first training took place in January 2020 with the participation of approximately 130 teachers of secondary education.
38. A good example of effective partnership between government agencies and civil society in the prevention of trafficking in human beings is the two public awareness campaigns carried out by the ONR with the participation of stakeholders over the past 5 years. The campaigns "Break the Chain" and "Raise Your Voice" brought together the representatives of civil society organizations involved in the fight against human trafficking in Greece. In 2019, as part of the "Break the Chain" campaign, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks organized an awareness-raising event on anti-trafficking measures that were posted on Athens Metro screens and public buses for a month. The organization of the "Break the Chain" campaign is one of the top priorities of the National Action Plan.
39. The Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Greece works closely with the ONR. The Common Action Plan was adopted, which includes organizing events with the participation of representatives of local authorities, the public and the private sector to raise awareness among the population about the risks of human trafficking and modern slavery, targeting a variety of target groups, including migrants and refugees. Expanding partnerships is a top priority for ONR. Local/regional authorities, the private sector, representatives of other states, as well as competent international organizations (GRETA / Council of Europe, OSCE, UNODC, UNHCR, IOM) are actively involved in this process.
40. National Strategy of the **Republic of Moldova** to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for 2018-2023 is developed based on a comprehensive study and includes measures to prevent this phenomenon, to provide social protection and assistance to victims, prosecution and trial. First Action Plan 2018-2020 includes training of the border police officers and other law enforcement authorities for the effective response in case of

identification of victims of trafficking in persons, updating the database on the registration of criminal cases on human trafficking. The strategy builds its activities in accordance with the international principles of 4Ps: Prosecution, Protection, Prevention, and Partnership. Among the main directions of combating human trafficking in the Republic of Moldova are: criminal prosecution of organizers; protection of victims of trafficking in persons; prediction/prevention.

41. The Republic of Moldova pursues a policy of combating trafficking in human beings, relying on institutional and legislative mechanisms, in cooperation with civil society and international structures. The legal framework regulating the fight against trafficking in human beings includes the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova, the Law on Preventing and Suppressing Trafficking in Human Beings, the Decision on the Approval of the Strategy of the National Referral System for the Protection and Assistance of Victims and Potential Victims of Human Trafficking, the Law on the Regime of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova, Decree on the establishment of a Centre for Assistance and Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy of the National Referral System to provide protection and assistance to victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings.
42. Measures to prevent trafficking in persons are also aimed at reducing the vulnerability of risk groups. In this regard, the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is a permanent advisory body to the Government, established to coordinate activities to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings. It includes representatives of state authorities, including law enforcement agencies and other structures that carry out activities to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. The National Committee monitors the implementation of measures stipulated by the National Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and the provisions of legislation in the field of preventing and combating human trafficking by state institutions and organizations; collects and analyses information on the scale, status and trends of trafficking in persons at the national level; develops proposals for improving legislation in the field of preventing and combating trafficking in persons and protecting victims of such trafficking; organizes campaigns to inform the population about the problem of human trafficking and the social danger of this phenomenon; coordinates the activities of territorial commissions and specialized institutions for the implementation of the activities of the National Plan, as well as on other issues related to the prevention and fight against trafficking in persons; evaluates and periodically monitors the implementation of the National Plan and informs the Government and civil society about its results.
43. The priority areas for the prevention of trafficking in persons are the strengthening of cooperation with partners to develop interaction with the various institutions responsible for preventing and combating trafficking in persons. Development partners (OSCE, IOM Mission to Moldova, La Strada International Centre, the National Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse (CNPAC), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)) provide capacity building support for professionals working in this field. To this end, such activities were carried out as informing the general public about the risks and consequences of human trafficking, development, drafting and subsequent dissemination of information materials, etc.
44. The Law of **Romania** No 678/2001 pursues the goal of resolving problems related to the prevention and fighting human trafficking, which is a violation of human rights and an abuse to human dignity and integrity, as well as protection and social assistance in the event of

such a crime. The legal framework of Romania, which supports and assists victims of trafficking in human beings, contains: Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child; Law No. 248/2005 on the free movement of Romanian citizens abroad; Law No. 135/2010 on the Criminal Procedure Code; Law no. 286/2009 on the Criminal Code of Romania.

45. National Strategy against Human Trafficking 2018-2022 and the National Action Plan 2018-2020 were approved by the Government Decision No. 861/31 October 2018. The aim of the Strategy is to strengthen and diversify the actions taken to prevent human trafficking; improving the quality of protection and assistance to victims of human trafficking in order to reintegrate them in society; capacity building in terms of investigation of crimes related to human trafficking and trafficking in children; increasing the quality of disseminated information on human trafficking; development and expansion of cooperation between national and international stakeholders involved in combating human trafficking, as well as strengthening diplomatic actions to prevent and combat human trafficking and to protect Romanian citizens in the destination countries.
46. The National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP) is the focal point for enforcement of human trafficking policies and carries out activities to prevent and monitor human trafficking and to provide protection and assistance to victims of human trafficking. The agency provides control at the national level of the activities of state structures and non-governmental organizations in the fight against human trafficking, acting as a national rapporteur. For this purpose, it cooperates with the units of the Ministry of Interior, as well as with other ministries and specialized bodies of central public administration, local self-government bodies, state institutions and Romanian and foreign non-governmental organizations, international organizations, other legal entities, and individual citizens.
47. In 2020, the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons launched several awareness campaigns: the online campaign “Perfect Job - One-Way Illusion” to raise awareness among job seekers through online platforms; The “Munca.info” campaign, run by the eLiberation Association with the support of several institutions and non-governmental organizations, including the National Agency against Trafficking in Human Beings; Campaign “Because People Matter, You Put a Barrier to Human Trafficking!” is carried out in cooperation with the General Inspectorate of the Border Police and will last until March 2021.
48. Combating human trafficking is viewed by the **Russian Federation** as an integral part of the observance of personal security and fundamental human rights and freedoms. Russia is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its complementary Protocol to Prevent and Suppress Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the Slavery Convention (as amended by the Protocol of December 7, 1953), the UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery.
49. As part of the obligations assumed by the Russian Federation to incorporate the provisions of international documents on the fight against human trafficking and slave labour into the national legislation, in 2003 criminal liability was introduced for the sale and purchase of a person and other operations regarding a person. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation identifies more than 15 crimes related to human trafficking.

50. In accordance with the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation” (as amended on 31 July 2020), federal and regional government bodies, as well as local authorities, within the limits of their powers, take measures to counter child trafficking and exploitation of children, as well as to provide the necessary pedagogical, psychological, medical, legal assistance to victims of child trafficking and (or) exploitation of children, their parents (persons replacing them). Public associations (organizations) and other non-profit organizations can assist the authorities in this.
51. At the same time, an important element is the system for the protection of victims of trafficking in persons, which is based on legislative guarantees for the protection of this category of persons. The Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation contains norms aimed at ensuring and protecting the rights of persons who have become victims of trafficking in persons or who harbour the information about this criminal activity.
52. Attention is attributed to the activities for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in persons, which are carried out mainly by individual non-profit organizations. In 2013, a shelter for temporary residence and social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in persons was opened in St. Petersburg, providing comprehensive rehabilitation assistance to victims of crimes in this area. Anti-trafficking issues are included as one of the areas of cooperation in intergovernmental and interagency agreements on cooperation in the fight against crime, concluded with more than 60 countries.
53. The Concept of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019-2025 includes the measures to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. The National Strategy for Action for Women 2017-2022 provides for the development and implementation of measures aimed at eliminating the sexual exploitation of women, human trafficking and the formation of a strong stand of the society against such phenomenon.
54. In the **Republic of Serbia**, the statistical analyses within the Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children and Protection of Victims for the Period 2017-2022 indicates to large number of domestic human trafficking victims with the increased number of child victims. The Council for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is operating since March 2010, consisting of 6 ministries Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education; and the Office for Coordination of Activities in the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Office of the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.
55. The Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment – SOCTA (2019) is a strategic document of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the area of trafficking in human beings. According to it, the Republic of Serbia is dominated by internal trafficking in human beings, whose victims are mostly domestic citizens (93%) exposed mainly to forced sexual and labour exploitation, forced begging and participation in criminal offences. In April 2012, the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings was established as a republic institution of social assistance, identification and coordination protection of victims of human trafficking.
56. On 16 December 2019 the Conference “Improvement of the Professional Procedure for Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia” was held in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, attended by representatives of the police, prosecutor’s office and the Centre for Social Work, Education, NGOs, Commissariat for Refugees and

Migration of the Republic of Serbia, IOM, the Republic Secretariat for Social Protection, local government bodies, members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and others. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Interior implemented the project “Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia” within the Horizontal Fund for the Western Balkans and Turkey. On 7 May 2018, a round table was held for participants in the private sector in the prevention and suppression of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation. In February 2020 the seminar was organised on “Updating Standard Operating Procedures for the Treatment of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Analysis Using SWOT Tools”.

57. The Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, continued to implement the second phase of the project “Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia” within the Horizontal Fund for the Western Balkans and Turkey. The activities aimed at raising awareness about trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation, as well as strengthening of multidisciplinary approach in the fight against trafficking in human beings continue. The second phase also aims to train health and education workers to recognise trafficking cases and respond appropriately. The project is planned to prolong till May 2022.
58. The Grand National Assembly of **Turkey** adopted amendments to the Turkish Penal Code in relation to the description of human trafficking. In addition, the Decision No 2003/6565 of the Council of Ministers was adopted in 2003 on victims of trafficking in persons who require physical and psychological treatment.
59. In 2020, measures were taken to prevent human trafficking. The Coordination Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is working to develop a strategy to prevent and combat the crime of trafficking in human beings, as well as to prepare action plans and ensure coordination between government agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Commission meets once a year under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of the Interior. The Commission is composed of representatives of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Customs and Trade, and the National Institution for Human Rights of Turkey, the General Directorate of the Employment Agency of Turkey, the General Directorate of Security, the General Command of the Gendarmerie, the Coast Guard Command and international organizations, municipalities and civil society organizations.
60. Civil organizations and institutions have organized trainings and awareness raising campaigns in the field of combating human trafficking. In this framework, training and awareness activities were organized by public institutions and organizations for 2,382 people. In order to draw public attention to the crime of human trafficking, public service announcements were prepared, and social media posts were shared as “Be my voice” about forced labour and child exploitation. This campaign embraced more than 1 million people. The Directorate General of Migration Management interviewed 20,335 people in 2016-2020 and elaborated respective policies according to the results.
61. Turkey provides physical, material, and psychological support to the human trafficking victims. Regardless of their citizenship, both Turkish and foreigner nationals, are given 3 shelters for the victims of human trafficking. Upon the request of the victims of human trafficking they are given support for their safe return to their home countries. Victims who

prefer to remain in Turkey, prior to all, get health check, if they have children, they are placed in the appropriate schools. Victims also get psychosocial support, are offered courses for obtaining profession or learning Turkish language and get on regular basis monthly financial support.

62. Turkey has signed agreements on cooperation in combating human trafficking and agreements on cooperation in the field of security with many countries including the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. All of these agreements contain provisions on the establishment of cooperation on illegal migration and the fight against human trafficking.
63. The Government of **Ukraine** develops the state policy in the field of combating human trafficking. By the Decree of the President of Ukraine No 306/2020 of 5 August 2020, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine was appointed as the national coordinator in the combating human trafficking. 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 carrying out necessary work to strengthen state control in the field of combating human trafficking. At present, a draft Concept of the State Social Program for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings has been elaborated for the period 2021-2025 and is submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.
64. The State Social Program for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for the period up to 2020 envisages the action plan including: strengthening the effectiveness of interaction between executive authorities, international organizations, public associations and other legal entities performing various functions in the area of combating human trafficking; raising the level of public awareness on ways to avoid the risks of falling into a situation of human trafficking and on the possibilities of receiving assistance in order to develop the skills of safe behaviour among the population; increasing the level of professional competence of employees of state authorities, in particular in the law enforcement and judicial systems; reducing prejudice towards persons who have suffered from trafficking in persons, increasing the level of trust in the executive authorities that carry out measures in the field of combating trafficking in persons; increasing the level of public confidence in the law enforcement and judicial systems; ensuring adequate protection for the provision of assistance to victims of trafficking in persons; implementation of measures to minimize the level of human trafficking.
65. With the aim to improve the legislation in terms of providing assistance to victims of human trafficking, the following was done: the conditions for the implementation of economic activities for the provision of intermediary services for employment abroad have been improved; protection of the rights of persons employed abroad has been increased; the responsibility of licensees has been strengthened by adopting the appropriate government decrees; improved legislative and regulatory acts aimed at protecting the rights of children. The Unified Register of Persons Convicted of Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Sexual Inviolability of Minors was introduced; and liability for crimes committed against sexual freedom and sexual inviolability of minors was increased; drafts of normative legal acts were developed aimed at improving the mechanism for preventing trafficking in persons, increasing the efficiency of identifying persons committing crimes related to human trafficking, as well as ensuring the protection of the rights of victims of human trafficking and their assistance.

66. The Ministry of Social Policy and the units that carry out the measures in the field of combating human trafficking in persons act in accordance with the norms of the current legislation, in particular: Resolution No 783 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On Approval of the Procedure for Interaction of Subjects Implementing Measures in the Field of Countering Trafficking in Human Beings” of 22 August 2012 (as amended) and the State Social Program for Combating Trafficking in Persons for the Period until 2020, approved by the Resolution No 111 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 24 February 2016 (as amended).

The Role of Parliaments

67. Parliaments and parliamentarians, guided by the national legislation and the international legal instruments, in their anti-trafficking activities and related crimes lead their legislative work within the key areas like participation in the elaboration of international normative legal instruments, expanding cooperation with international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, strengthening law enforcement and enhancing the exchange of information and experience.

68. From the very beginning of its activity, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation has been debating the issues related to fight against human trafficking, and since its very first meetings has examined the important social aspects of this phenomenon. The Assembly has prepared a series of reports and recommendations* in this sphere calling for strengthening social cohesion, as well as ensuring respect for human rights and the implementation of international anti-trafficking standards.

69. Parliaments have a special role to play in adopting all kinds of legislative, policy and other measures aimed at preventing human trafficking and ensuring broad accountability and transparency of public institutions in their work through regular assessments of their performance with the participation of representatives of both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

70. The work of the relevant parliamentary committees places special attention to the revision of the existing laws, ensuring the consistency and conformity of the domestic legislation with the international legal instruments on human trafficking and international conventions on human rights.

71. It is also imperative that parliaments increase consultations with ombudsmen and civil society representatives in order to follow-up the trafficked victims within the country and monitor the implementation by the government of its social policy on protecting victims of trafficking.

72. During the pandemic, it is necessary to ensure a systemic approach of the authorities, their readiness to take responsibility for ensuring social equality for the most vulnerable members

* *Report and Recommendation 15/1996 “Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries in Combating Organized Crime”*; *Report and Recommendation 17/1996 “Basic Principles of the Black Sea Convention in Organized Crime and Terrorism”*; *Report and Recommendation 35/1999 “The Legal Framework for Combating Trafficking in People”*; *Report and Recommendation 41/1999 “The Legal Framework of Child Protection in the BSEC Member-Countries”*; *Report and Recommendation 67/2002 “Social Reintegration of Jobless People”*; *Report and Recommendation 74/2003 “The Fight against Poverty in the BSEC Member-States”*; *Report and Recommendation 124/2011 “Implementation of the Agreements among the BSEC Member States on Combating Organised Crime”*; *Report and Recommendation 130/2012 “Social Welfare Reforms in the BSEC Member States”*; *Report and Recommendation 156/2017 Role of Parliaments in Strengthening Legislative Framework for Economic Growth and Social Integration*.

of society, and to use possible resources. In this respect, the role of parliaments is of particular importance.

73. Measures to strengthen national legislation are necessary to increase the capacity of national social protection systems, and develop a new strategy for sustainable development. During the pandemic, parliaments and parliamentarians need to ensure a high level of mobilization of the authorities and people in providing targeted assistance to those in need.
74. Trust of citizens in public institutions, as well as transparency and social cohesion increase the willingness of a society to prevent human trafficking. In this regard, the involvement and participation of all sectors of society is to be ensured. Parliaments should provide a legal framework that will result in reaching more sustainable society after the crisis.
75. Parliaments are a cornerstone to fostering dialogue and cooperation with the public on risk assessment and elaboration of approach towards preventing human trafficking. They play an important role in the process of raising public awareness with the aim to increase the understanding of the problem of human trafficking.
76. It is important to prepare and ratify, as appropriate, bilateral and multilateral agreements on mutual legal assistance and extradition of criminals, as well as to provide protection and assistance to the victims of human trafficking and their repatriation.
77. The exchange of best practices takes place not only in the process of joint practical work, but also in the course of international forums on the prediction and prevention of human trafficking. Therefore, greater coherence in parliamentary cooperation at the international and regional levels is of great importance.

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

78. People are moving around the world in ever-increasing pace. In search of a better life, or simply due to the existing circumstances, people move from villages to cities, from cities to other countries. Many of them manage, despite difficulties, to find new jobs and build new lives, but also many of them end up in the networks of traffickers. The ongoing crisis caused by the pandemic makes this situation even more complicated for the countries taking measures to overcome social problems and strengthen counteraction.
79. Despite the growing attention to this problem and the effectiveness of law enforcement, human trafficking remains an extremely profitable business and an urgent problem for the entire world community. It is supported by criminals and individuals who seek to exploit gaps in domestic migration and labour legislation. This well-designed transnational illegal activity generates huge criminal profits and takes a leading position in the criminal world in terms of profitability.
80. Large-scale measures at the national and multilateral levels are not able to fully block the spread of human trafficking in countries and regions. The effectiveness of systemic solutions depends on effective partnerships between governments and the support of the international and regional organizations. A clear program of action is needed, aimed at changing the public opinion with regard to human trafficking, ensuring social rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims.
81. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, within their competences, have developed a number of multilateral documents on topical issues of economic cooperation in the region,

including the fight against human trafficking. However, more decisive action is needed both by individual states and at the regional level.

82. Expanding awareness-raising campaigns targeting persons who may become victims of trafficking as well as the general public through education activities and effective media engagement is essential. To this end, all citizens should take their role in preventing and combating human trafficking.
83. Human trafficking causes social fragmentation and the disintegration of social structures. Trafficking victims often miss the important opportunities for their social, mental and spiritual development. It is extremely difficult for victims to recover from the physical and psychological damage. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure the protection of victims, but more effective work needs to be done to timely reveal the victims and potential victims of human trafficking.
84. It is also very important to ensure that social, cultural and other factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking are eliminated, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, humanitarian emergencies, including armed conflicts and natural disasters, domestic violence, discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization.
85. Human trafficking is a global challenge that does not recognise national borders. Combating this crime requires transnational approach through the international cooperation in the form of effective information exchange and mutual assistance. The channel of trafficking in persons will be considered successfully blocked only when the law enforcement authorities will eliminate the entire chain of organizers, recruiters, transporters, harbouring agents, and exploiters operating along the entire trafficking route from the countries of origin through the transit countries and in the countries of destination.
86. The prevention of human trafficking and related crimes is a topical challenge for all the countries in the world. Today, no state is able to cope with this problem on its own. Such a dangerous negative social phenomenon can only be eliminated by joint effort and close cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination at all levels, including the active participation of parliaments and parliamentarians. It should also be kept in mind that the prevention of human trafficking does not imply only responsibility of government authorities. Ordinary people and civil society can bring their own contribution to the fight against this crime.