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**ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

REPORT*

«The Role of Parliaments in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings- Economic Aspects»

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I INTRODUCTION

1. Trafficking in human beings is not a new phenomenon. It has existed throughout the human history and still exists in different manifestations, despite the strong national and global efforts to eradicate it. What is new is its global expansion throughout the states across the globe, with trafficking beyond national boundaries exceeding domestic volume. International trafficking in persons is a global problem that transcends national boundaries and breaks the rule of law in source, transit and destination countries.
2. Trafficking in human beings is a form of modern slavery, a serious violation of fundamental rights of person and a particularly serious form of organized crime, driven by profit and involving various actors. The human suffering and costs of societies and economies, due to this kind of organized crime, are enormous. According to the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) database on global human trafficking patterns, human trafficking affects all the BSEC Member States. This partially derives from the geo-strategic position of the region, located on one of the transit routes of trafficking.
3. Presently, international trafficking in human beings represents a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that affects all the aspects of the society: economic, social, political, security and demographic, as well international relations. It is a form of organized crime that affects nearly every country but significant social, economic, and cultural differences in different countries result in various approaches and priorities given to the fight against it. A growing number of law enforcement agencies, police, courts, prosecutors, border forces and other state institutions as well as international and regional organizations, representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations, in the scope of their mandate, are challenged with the necessity of effectively solving human trafficking problems.
4. Taking into consideration the seriousness of the topic and the adverse consequences of the trafficking in human beings, to the economies and societies, the Fifty-Fifth Meeting of the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee, held on 7 October 2020, took the decision to discuss "The Role of Parliaments in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings- Economic Aspects" as the main issue of the agenda of the Fifty-Sixth Meeting. The Report is submitted to the Fifty Sixth Meeting of the Committee, on 17 March 2021 and to the 57th Plenary Session of the General Assembly, to be held in June 2021.
5. In the course of its activities, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation has attributed a substantial attention to the issue of combating all forms of organized crime and the improvement of human rights. Therefore, the Assembly came up with Reports and Recommendations, calling for adequate measures at the national level and for the cooperation with specialized regional and international institutions, as follows: 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 124/2011 "Implementation of the Agreements among the BSEC Member States on Combating Organised Crime".
6. In the BSEC framework, in 1998, the Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime,

in particular, in its Organized Forms (Kerkyra, Greece, 2 October, 1998) was signed and was followed by the adoption of two additional protocols: the Additional Protocol to the Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its organized forms (Kiev, 15 March, 2002) and the Additional Protocol on combating terrorism, to the Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its organized forms (Athens, 3 December, 2004).

7. In the Document “The BSEC Economic Agenda - Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership”, which was adopted in Istanbul, on 26 June 2012, it is stressed that the key priorities for the BSEC activity in the area of cooperation on combating crime, in particular its organized forms are defined by Goal 16 “Combating Organized Crime, Illegal Trafficking of Drugs and Weapons, Terrorism, Corruption and Money Laundering”. The main activities are carried out by the BSEC Working Group on Combating Crime, in Particular in its Organized Forms, with the aim of strengthening the cooperation among the BSEC Member States, in combating organized crime activities, including the trafficking in human beings.
8. To this end, the BSEC, together with the UNODC, initiated a “Regional Action Plan for Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking in Persons in the Black Sea Region”, adopted at the 19th Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Tirana, on 23 October 2008. Along with its policy development and capacity building aspects, the Document gives a special consideration to three basic elements in fighting human trafficking — prevention, protection and prosecution. The Plan is not binding and every BSEC Member State is encouraged to implement it, in accordance with its national legislation. The Plan envisages the actions for sharing expertise and best practices, provides guidance for further developments towards more effective prevention and investigation of human trafficking, increased prosecution and conviction of traffickers and adequate support and protection of victims.
9. The present Report uses the information from the national delegations of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. It also uses the research material, reports of relevant international organizations as well as the information from various Internet sources.

II ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

10. In accordance with Article 3 of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, human trafficking is “...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”. This internationally agreed definition is used as a reference of trafficking, in domestic legislation.

11. There are significant economic factors that lead individuals to become vulnerable to human trafficking and an easy prey for traffickers. One of such factors is poverty. In addition, social and economic inequality and insecurity, lack of economic and employment opportunities, volatility of global market, economic crisis and decline, increasing social instability are also the root causes of human trafficking in the BSEC Member States. All these factors fuel the supply principle and meet the high demand for trafficked labour, as various businesses look for the low-cost labour sources. This market-driven competitive industry is created both across and within national borders, where human beings are deprived of basic human rights and treated like commodities, with no right to choose the type, place and duration of work.
12. According to the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, in 2020, specific economic sectors are more vulnerable to trafficking for forced labour than others. Most at risk are sectors where work is undertaken in isolated conditions, such as the fishery, construction, agriculture and domestic work. Recruitment and exploitation for forced labour are often enabled by recruiting agencies and labour intermediation at the local or international levels. While patterns of trafficking for forced labour vary across economic sectors, one feature is common for all: it is generally the result of a worsening of labour rights, such as lower salaries, longer working hours, reduced protections and informal employment. It is also to be noted that due to new technologies, some traffickers adapted their modus operandi by misusing Internet and digital platforms to advertise, recruit and exploit victims.
13. According to the estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO), released in 2017, the 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery. There were 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every thousand people in the world, in 2016 and 24.9 million people were in forced labour. The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons in 2020, points out to a general global increase in this type of crime, as countries are identifying and reporting more victims and are sentencing more traffickers. In addition, as most countries have a comprehensive legislation regarding trafficking in persons, the number of convictions has started to increase and globally, the number of people convicted per 100,000 population, has nearly tripled, since 2003.
14. It is important to note that the income generated by this form of organized crime is significant and global. Given the ongoing nature of exploitation, human trafficking creates a steady and regular source of income for criminal networks, with a consequent impact on other forms of criminal activity, as well as legitimate business. It is a drain of resources to all but the perpetrators that generate high profits with low costs and limited risks of doing business.
15. The organized crime of human trafficking is considered to be the third most lucrative criminal enterprise, globally. The ILO estimates that it generates an estimated 150 billion USD dollars (approx. 123.9 billion EUR) annually, out of which two thirds (99 billion USD- approx. 81.7 billion EUR), by commercial sexual exploitation, while another 51 billion USD (approx. 42.1 billion EUR) resulted from forced economic exploitation, including domestic work, agriculture and other economic activities. The European Commission, in its “Third Report on the Progress Made in the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings”, refers to even higher estimates on global annual profit, from trafficking in human beings, amounting to 29.4 billion EUR (2020).
16. The profits accumulated from the criminal business of human trafficking do not improve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a nation, on the contrary, it causes

damage to the economy and economic and national security, as trafficking diverts economic resources away from society and legitimate economy. The loss in the GDP derives from the lost legal employment and lost economic output, declines in tax revenue, meaning lost taxes that the victim might otherwise directed to the state, the lost earnings that legitimate employers cannot make as well as the loss of human resources.

17. Human trafficking is responsible for funding other illegal activities, such as drugs trafficking, illegal arms and ammunitions trafficking, funding terrorist activities, migrant smuggling, etc. It also poses subsequent threat by an unfair competition on legitimate businesses, such as the service sector, the tourism and hospitality ones, that have the capacity to enhance the economic conditions of a country.
18. The difficulties in assessing the economic consequences and impact of human trafficking are most apparent when trying to measure its economic costs. The costs of the crime of trafficking in persons comprise many aspects, including the value of all resources allocated to its prevention, the treatment and support of victims and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. These costs may be partly compensated by the recovery and confiscation of criminal proceeds and assets of the traffickers. Further, according to the UNODC, “trafficking in persons redirects the financial benefits of migration from migrants, their families, community and government or other potential legitimate employers to traffickers and their associates”.
19. The very existence of human trafficking is a cost to the wider economy and society, by creating a need for public services that would not be needed otherwise, in diverting resources away from the legal economy, and affecting the quality of life. The cost of human trafficking is borne by the public. According to the conservative estimate based on the number of registered victims in the EU Member States’ authorities, presented in “The Study on the Economic, Social and Human Costs of Trafficking in Human Beings” of the European Commission in 2018, the total cost of trafficking in human beings for the European Union, in 2016, amounted to 3.7 billion EUR. Per victim, the cost of trafficking over their lifetime, in the EU, is estimated to 312 756 EUR. Three main types of costs of trafficking in human beings are: use of services (coordination and prevention, specialised services, law enforcement, health services and social protection) by 40%, in EU; lost economic output, by 19%; lost quality of life, by 41%.
20. It should be noted that due to globalization, open borders and visa-free travel, it is a rising challenge to detect victims of human trafficking. In most cases of trafficking in human beings, people enter the country by crossing the border legally, with valid documents. In this situation, only a small percentage of trafficking can be stopped and prevented at the border, through the use of border control measures.
21. Trafficking in human beings is likely to increase in the wake of the economic downturn, uncertainty and increased unemployment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has intensified the systemic and deeply rooted economic and societal disparities that are among the main causes of human trafficking. It has disrupted global and national economic activity unprecedentedly and worsened the already challenging economic conditions and inequality, thus contributing to human trafficking. While the Covid-19 threat is universal, the negative effects of this crisis are disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable groups of people, who are at greater risk of trafficking in pandemic times. The pandemic has also presented new opportunities for perpetrators that are adjusting to the new circumstances. In its 2020 Study, the Europol warned that in the aftermath of the pandemic, there could be an increased demand for trafficked

persons in the traditional fields of exploitation, as well as in sectors, such as construction, tourism, catering, nursing and domestic services.

22. At the same time, as the response of the states in fighting the Covid-19, resulted in the closing of borders and imposing stringent mobility restrictions, the options for regular migration to more affluent countries have become limited, which has increased the already high demand for smuggling services and risks of being trafficked. In current migration flows and context, the timely identification and detection of the potential victims of trafficking remains a challenge, especially given the fine line of separation between migrant smuggling and human trafficking. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the capacity of state authorities and agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide vital services to the victims of trafficking, as governments are modifying their priorities, gravitating resources to address public health concerns, in the pandemic times. In the upcoming period, once national economies are back on track as they reopen and labour migration rises to pre-pandemic levels, there could be an increased potential for forced labour, as companies will try to meet increased demand and cut costs.
23. Another economic aspect of human trafficking is that trafficking may be enabled by legitimate businesses or individuals working for or with trafficking organizations, along or during the trafficking process. Human trafficking often occurs in complex supply chains and workplaces and it can be found in the production of goods and the distribution of the services, since in today's globalized economy, goods, materials and labour are obtained from all around the world. In its Report of 2016, the International Trade Union Confederation estimates that around 50 companies, with a combined profit of 3.4 trillion USD (approx. 2.8 trillion EUR), may have a hidden labour force of 116 million people, in their global supply chains. The risks of human trafficking and labour exploitation may also be present in the goods and services that businesses provide to public authorities.
24. Thus, the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour was initiated, in order to promote economic development and decent work in global supply chains, as well as the respect for international labour standards. In 2015, the global community adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), a list of seventeen goals and 169 targets, to guide comprehensive global development, including three targets addressing trafficking in human beings. The ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour is built on these targets, especially target 8.7 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".
25. Recognizing the challenge of human trafficking in global supply chains and in government public procurement procedures, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights recommend that governments work jointly with the private sector and involve businesses, to report publicly on measures to decrease human trafficking and forced labour in their supply chains and conduct a wide-ranging revision of their own public procurement practices.

III SITUATION IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

26. The Criminal Code of **the Republic of Albania**, approved by Law no. 7895, dated 27.1.1995 and amended in 2017, by Law no. 36/2017 and by Law no.89/2017, considers

the criminal acts against freedom of person, as well as criminal acts against morality and dignity, and criminal acts against children, marriage and family. The Criminal Code Article 124/b “Juvenile abuse” explicitly incriminates the obligation, exploitation, incitement or use of a juvenile to work, to earn an income, to beg or to engage in activities that impair his or her mental and /or physical development, or education. Article 128 /b of the Criminal Code also provides for the trafficking in juveniles. This provision punishes the recruitment, sale, transportation, transfer, concealment, or reception of minors, for the purpose of exploiting prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or similar forms of slavery, exploitation or organ transplantation, as well as other forms of exploitation. All these activities are severely punishable. In cases when this activity is accompanied by qualifying circumstances, such as directing, organizing and financing of trafficking, when it is committed in collaboration, more than once or with physical or psychological consequences, the punishment of imprisonment is more severe.

27. In addition to human traffickers, the Criminal Code provides penalties for persons that use the services of trafficked persons. Article 110/b of the Code stipulates that the benefit or use of services provided by trafficked persons, or services that are the object of exploitation by trafficking, knowing that the person is trafficked, is punishable by imprisonment, of two to five years. When this offence is committed against a child, it is punishable by imprisonment of three to seven years. The use of force in the case of trafficking human beings, is a circumstance which aggravates the punishment of imprisonment, but it is not a necessary element of the objective side of the criminal offence. In the case where the trafficked subjects are minors, the punishment is even more severe. Trafficking in minors is a separate criminal offence, and their exploitation is an aggravating circumstance. Criminal offences regarding trafficking in adults, trafficking of minors and the benefit or use of services, provided by trafficked persons, were added to the Criminal Code, in 2011 and in 2013.
28. The Committee on Economy and Finance of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania, on 3 March 2020, reviewed the financial and economic terms of the Draft Law “On some amendments and additions to the Law no.1092 dated from 3. 12.2009”, for giving opinion “On prevention and crackdown of organized crime, trafficking, corruption and other crimes through preventive measures against the property”, as amended, which focuses on the administration of sequestrated assets resulting from organized crime, trafficking, corruption and other crimes.
29. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was signed by the **Republic of Armenia** on 16 May 2005, and ratified and entered into force on 14 April 2008 and on 1 August of the same year, respectively. The current legal act regulating trafficking in human beings, is the Law on “On Identification of and Support to Persons Subjected to Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation” which entered into force on 1 July 2015. The Law regulates the relations regarding the processes of referral of persons suspected to have been subjected to trafficking in human beings and/or exploitation from the moment of their detection, as well as the processes of gathering and exchange of information with regards to those persons, their identification as victims or victims of special category, providing them with support and protection, relevant residence status and safe return. The Law also provides for main bodies ensuring the implementation of this Law. The Council of the Republic of Armenia on Fighting against Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation is a body comprised of the senior officials of the stakeholder state bodies in the sphere of fight against trafficking in human beings and exploitation. The purpose of the Council is

setting the policy for the fight against trafficking in human beings and exploitation in the Republic of Armenia, general coordination of the activities conducted by the government, local authorities and other bodies in this sphere, supervision of working groups and commissions, operating adjunct to the Council. The Interagency Working Group operates with the purpose of organising the ongoing activities of the Council. A partner NGO is a non-governmental organization carrying out activities related to the fight against trafficking in human beings or exploitation, the cooperation with the state government and local self-government bodies of the Republic of Armenia, in the sphere of the fight against trafficking in human beings and exploitation. The Commission on Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation is the sole body vested with the authority to recognize a person as a victim or a victim of special category.

30. Presently, two state programmes are being implemented - The State Programme for Social-Psychological Rehabilitation of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation of, Women and Girls Subjected to Sexual Exploitation and the State Programme for Lump-Sum Monetary Compensation for Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation, within the scope of which the mentioned groups receive long-term support and monetary assistance. The support package provided within the scope of the first programme, includes provision of accommodation, assistance, legal protection, provides the opportunity to make use of state healthcare, educational and other social programmes and helps to find a way out of the critical situation, return to normal life, avoiding victimisation.
31. In the **Republic of Bulgaria**, the national policy addressing the fight against trafficking in human beings and the protection of the victims, is regulated in the Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act (CTHBA), adopted in 2003. Two regulations are available to the Act – for the organization and the activities of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and for the establishment and the functioning of specialized services for victims of trafficking in human beings. The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2017 – 2021 is another key strategic document adopted in 2017, which is implemented in practice, through the annual National Programmes for Preventing and Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims.
32. In 2004, the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (NCCTHB) was established, which is a collective state structure of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. Under the CTHBA, the Commission is chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister and includes eleven members, at the level of Deputy Ministers or Deputy Chairpersons of Agencies. The NCCTHB defines and directs the implementation of the national policy and strategy, in the field of counteracting trafficking in human beings; organises and coordinates the interaction between the different law enforcement agencies and organizations; works to prevent trafficking in human beings and to protect, restore and reintegrate the victims of trafficking. The NCCTHB annually develops and submits for approval of the Council of Ministers, a National Programme for Prevention and Counteracting Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims, as well as an annual report on the implementation of the Programme. Upon the initiative of the NCCTHB and the municipalities in the cities of Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Sliven, Veliko Tarnovo, Blagoevgrad, Pazardzhik, Montana, Ruse and Pleven, local commissions for combating trafficking in human beings (LCCTHB) have been established, which have the role of regional anti-trafficking coordinators in the country.

33. In 2020, the total funding approved by the state budget for the NCCTHB, including for anti-trafficking activities and services for victims of trafficking, was BGN 440,400 (approx. 220 200 EUR). In addition, within the framework of the annual National Programme, a number of activities are carried out, in cooperation with and through the co-financing of other institutions and organisations, including municipalities in which LCCTHB have been established. Over the past seven years, the NCCTHB has co-financed activities set out in the National Programme for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, with the help of the Hanns Seidel Foundation. For 2020, the financial framework of the cooperation agreement with the Foundation, amounts to BGN 31,000 (approx. 15 500 EUR). The specialized services to the NCCTHB are funded from the state budget and are provided by NGOs.
34. All social services, which are a state delegated activity, are financed from the state budget, according to standards adopted annually, by a decision of the Council of Ministers. There is a trend towards an annual increase in the funding for social services. In 2019, a Social Services Act was adopted, that entered into force on 1 July 2020. It addresses all key issues relevant to the social services sector, related to the mechanisms for planning, delivery, financing, control and monitoring of the social services. NGOs and international organizations provide support to the victims of trafficking in human beings, based on project funding, which is separate from the state funding.
35. **The Hellenic Republic** stepped up the efforts to fight trafficking in human beings, through the introduction of three pivotal legal instruments: the ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol- the “Palermo Protocol” (Law 3875/2010); the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Law 4216/2013) and the transposition of the anti-trafficking EU Directive (2011/36/EC/ Law 4198/2013). The amendment of Greek Penal Code that came into effect on 1 July 2019, brought significant changes to the legislation regarding trafficking in human beings.
36. The Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (ONR) was officially established in 2013, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following the transposition of the EU ‘Anti-trafficking’ Directive 2011/36/EU (Law 4198/2013). The ONR is mandated to cooperate closely with all competent ministries as well as with international organizations (OSCE, UN, Council of Europe) and civil society stakeholders and is active in all four pillars of the Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships). The ONR coordinates and supervises the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the identification and referral of victims of trafficking in human beings, which was officially launched on the 1st of January 2019. The NRM operates as a hub for coordinated action and partnership, building within law enforcement (police and prosecutors), front-line professionals, local administration authorities and other stakeholders who may come across vulnerable to human trafficking populations. The National Action Plan 2019-2023, drafted by the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, covers a wide range of policy-making projects that include, inter alia, measures to reduce vulnerabilities, trainings for more front-line professionals, targeted awareness-raising campaigns, assistance to and reintegration of victims, gender-informed policies, promotion of cooperation between national and international actors and enhanced action against organized crime.

37. The development of a more inclusive framework of partnerships is a top priority for the ONR. This involves local/regional authorities, private sector stakeholders, other states, as well as competent international organizations (GRETA/Council of Europe, OSCE, UNODC, UNHCR, IOM). It is considered that one of the best ways to confront the link between economies and trafficking in human beings/forced labour, is involvement of the local and regional governments in this effort. For this purpose, the Regional Government of Attica has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ONR, aiming to: fully integrate the regional welfare structures into the NRM; provide training to frontline professionals regarding the NRM Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for identification and referral of presumed victims; launch large scale awareness raising campaigns; support social entrepreneurship initiatives for the reintegration of victims of human trafficking; develop technological applications for the identification of victims, and design and implement a due diligence program in supply chains and public procurement, to ensure that the Regional Government of Attica upholds international best practices in this field. The ONR intends to promote the same model of cooperation with other local government authorities throughout the country.
38. In 2016, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee against Human Trafficking and exploitation was established under the hub of the Parliamentary Special Permanent Committee on Equality, Youth and Human Rights. The Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring developments, legislative updates and the overall implementation of counter-trafficking in human beings policies and measures.
39. In order to transpose at the national level the international commitments, the following legislation was adopted in **the Republic of Moldova**: Law no. 67/2006 for the ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, in force since 1 February 2008; Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova - punishes trafficking in human beings and trafficking in children, as well as the use of the results of the labour or services of a person who is a victim of trafficking in human beings, forced labour, procuring, organising illegal migration, trafficking in human organs, tissues and cells; Government Decision no. 472/2008 on the approval of the membership of the National Committee for combating trafficking in human beings and of the Committee's Rules of Procedure; Government Decision no. 461/2018 on the approval of the National Strategy on the prevention and combating trafficking in human beings, for 2018-2023 and the Action Plan on its implementation for 2018-2020.
40. A national mechanism has been introduced to ensure the coordination of national policies in combating trafficking in human beings, the activities of the legal bodies related to combating it and the activities meant to grant direct assistance to the victims of human trafficking. The mechanism is working at all the levels of public administration and comprises not only institutions of the central and local public administration, but also inter-department advisory bodies. Concerning the collaboration between the public and private sectors, the initiation of such an initiative dates since 2019, when about 95 representatives/employees of airlines (Air Moldova and Fly One), MGH Handling and the agricultural sector, were trained on the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and on the way in which they could help prevent and combat this phenomenon.
41. Until 2018, the national policy in the field was implemented in accordance with the provisions of the national plans for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, approved by the Government (seven plans have been implemented since 2001),

and the National Reference System Strategy for the protection and assistance of the victims and of the potential victims of trafficking in human beings (2009-2016), adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The National Strategy for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for 2018-2023, was developed in order to incorporate the strategic objectives of the state, in the fight against the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, harmonising and strengthening the efforts of the competent and interested institutions/organisations. The aim of the Strategy is to achieve the sustainable development of the national system, for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, in accordance with the 4P policy paradigm – recommended by the international standards in this field: prevention, protection, punishment, partnership – so that cope with the challenges.

42. Financial means were allocated for the maintenance of the Centre for protection and assistance of the victims of human trafficking of Cahul district and the psychosocial centres for the rehabilitation of the victims of domestic violence of Anenii Noi, Căușeni, Drochia, Hîncești districts and Bălți municipality. Financial means amounting to 8 122.9 thousand lei (approx. 384725 EUR) have been provided and directed, by a special purpose transfer from the state budget to the second level local budgets. For financing the Centre for assistance and protection of the victims of human trafficking, in Chișinău municipality, allocations amounting to 3 923.6 thousand lei (approx. 185825 EUR) were approved in the budget of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection. Regarding the protection and assistance of the victims of human trafficking (the procedures of repatriation of the victims of human trafficking, of unaccompanied children and of people in difficulty), financial means amounting to 350.0 thousand lei (approx. 16580 EUR) were approved in the budget of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection.
43. In **Romania**, sanctioning and fighting human trafficking have been a constant concern and have gained a full-fledged regulatory framework, through Law no. 678/2001 on Prevention of and Fighting Human Trafficking, as further amended by Law no. 230/2010; Law no. 248/2005 on the Free Movement of the Romanian Citizens Abroad, as amended and supplemented; Law no. 286/2009 on the Criminal Code of Romania, as amended and supplemented; Law no. 135/2010 on the Criminal Procedure Code, as amended and supplemented and Law no.272/2004 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children, as amended and supplemented.
44. The National Strategy against Human Trafficking for 2018-2022 and the National Action Plan 2018-2020 were approved through Government Decision no. 861/31 of October 2018. The overall objectives of the Strategy are the following: strengthening and diversifying the actions undertaken in order to prevent human trafficking; improving the quality of protection and assistance provided to victims of human trafficking in order to re-integrate them in society; capacity building in terms of investigation of human trafficking crimes and trafficking of children; increasing quality of information disseminated in relation to the human trafficking phenomenon; developing and expanding the cooperation among relevant national and international stakeholders involved in the fight against human trafficking, as well as providing an impetus to the diplomatic action efforts of prevention and fighting human trafficking and protecting the Romanian citizens in the destination countries.
45. The National Agency against Trafficking in Persons is the national coordinator of the enforcement of human trafficking policies (except for international judicial cooperation in criminal matters) and carries out activities to prevent and monitor human trafficking,

and to provide protection and assistance for human trafficking victims. The Agency evaluates and monitors, at national level, the activity carried out against human trafficking, by public institutions and nongovernmental organizations, with the role of national rapporteur. The Agency collaborates with the Ministry of Interior units as well as with the other ministries and specialized bodies of the central public administration, the authorities of the local public administration, public institutions, the Romanian and foreign nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, other legal entities, as well as with individuals, within the limits of the law.

46. The Parliament of Romania is among the first Parliaments of the EU Member States, which initiated a procedure designed to shape the partnership and exchange information between relevant stakeholders within all public administration sectors and civil society, to enable efficient prevention and fighting against human trafficking. The Parliament of Romania created in 2009, the Group on Fighting Human Trafficking, as a part of the wider context of measures which have been taken to prevent and fight human trafficking. The Group was established as part of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Romanian Parliament. The Group's goal is to reduce human trafficking, both in Romania, as a country of origin and transit, and the European Union; enhance the impact of prevention actions; increase the number of cases investigated and convictions of traffickers; streamline the specific actions of law enforcement bodies; consolidate integrated border management systems and ensure measures to protect victims.
47. The development of a state program to combat trafficking in human beings and their exploitation began in **Russia** in the second half of the 90ies. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation was adopted in 1996 which stipulates the punishment for child trafficking (Article 152). In December 2003, two articles were included in the Criminal Code, criminalizing human trafficking (Article 127.1) and the use of slave labor (Article 127.2) in the Russian Federation. The Federal Law "On State Protection of Victims, Witnesses and Other Participants in Criminal Proceedings" entered into force in 2004. This step recorded the recognition by the state of the problem of human trafficking in Russia. In the 2000s, the improvement of the Russian legislation in this area has continued. At present seven articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation imply punishment for the crimes in the field of human trafficking.
48. Russia is a party to the basic international legal documents on trafficking in persons, such as: 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); ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999); United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000). Russia 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 g.). In October 2015, the Report on the Implementation of the Provisions of the Optional Protocol by the Russian Federation was submitted to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child.
49. In 2017, the Russian Federation took an active part in the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. In order to practically

implement the Global Plan of Action, Russia actively participates in the work of the Group of Friends established by the initiative of Belarus, which is called upon to bring together the parties in combatting human trafficking. Russia supports the steps to implement the agreements reached within the Group on taking advantage of the potential of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) and its member organizations for the implementation of the Action Plan.

50. At the regional level, the priority in this area for Russia is strengthening of cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Its legal basis is the Concept of Cooperation between the CIS Member States to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted in 2014. Within the CIS framework, there is also the Interstate Program of Joint Measures to Combat Crime for 2019-2023, adopted by the Decision of the Council of Heads of State of the CIS on 28 September 2018. The Program includes measures to combat various forms of crime, including human trafficking. It envisages the development and use of the CIS Member States Security Agencies and Special Services United Data Bank to Counter Organized Crime aiming at effective information-sharing and cooperation in the field of combating human trafficking; exchange of information used in the mass media and the Internet on illegal migration and human trafficking; awareness of citizens about the threats of becoming potential victims of trafficking; organization of scientific practical conferences, as well as training of professionals in contact with the victims of such crimes.
51. The Constitution of **the Republic of Serbia**, by the provision of Article 26, explicitly prohibits slavery or a position similar to slavery and any form of trafficking in human beings and forced labour. During the past years, legal regulations have been improved, the legal minimum and maximum in the basic form of the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings have been increased. The laws regulating the trafficking in human beings and its consequences are primarily: the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code; the Law on Organisation and Competence of State Authorities in the Suppression of Organised Crime, Terrorism and Corruption and Other Particularly Serious Criminal Offences; the Law on Seizure and Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime; the Law on Police; the Law on the Protection Programme for Participants in Criminal Proceedings; the Law on Social Protection; the Law on Conditions for Sending Employees to Temporary Work Abroad and Their Protection; the Family Law; the Law on Gender Equality; the Law on Migration Management and the Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection. All these regulations were discussed at the competent committees and adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.
52. 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. It was established in December 2005, as an expert advisory body to the Government. The Council is chaired by the Minister of the Interior. In the Ministry of the Interior, within the headquarters of the Police Directorate, an Office for Coordination of Activities in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at the national level, with a multidisciplinary approach, has been established. The National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator is also the head of the Office for Coordination of Activities in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Moreover, in July 2020, the National Strategy for Exercising the Rights of Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offences in the Republic of Serbia, for the period 2020-2025, was adopted, with the accompanying Action Plan.

53. In July 2019, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted 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 2019 and 2020, which includes the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) recommendations that require urgent action. An important part of the national anti-trafficking mechanism is the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, which is the basic mechanism for identifying and coordinating the protection of victims of trafficking.
54. The funds for the implementation of the Action Plan of the Strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children and to protect victims, for the period 2019-2020, were provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, in the total amount of 7881680 dinars (approx. 66794 EUR). Funds in the amount of 300000 dinars (approx. 2542 EUR) have been allocated from the budget of the Ministry of the Interior, for the training of employees. Support for the implementation of the activities of the Action Plan 2019-2020, is also provided from donor funds, through projects and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds. In addition, within the Action Plan for Chapter 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security, subchapter 6.2 - Fight against organised crime, group of activities 6.2.8., which refer to the fight against trafficking in human beings in 2020, funds from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, in the total amount of 89424 euros have been allocated.
55. **The Republic of Turkey** takes measures to fulfill its obligations under international law to which it is a party and to get the maximum efficiency. Turkey develops and updates the legislation with a holistic approach. In connection with various aspects of the subject, legislation on migration, labor law, health, protection of children and other issues have been revised, taking this fact into consideration. With the revision of the legislation in terms of combating human trafficking, the fight against human trafficking has shifted from combating to prevention. With these initiatives, Turkey has become a country that approaches the prevention of human trafficking proactively. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, known as Palermo Protocol (2000) was signed by Turkey on 13 December 2000 and was incorporated into domestic legislation on 30 January 2003. Also, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was signed by Turkey on 19 March 2009 and on 30 January 2016 was incorporated into domestic legislation. Turkey attaches importance to regional cooperation and participates in international agreements. As of today, Turkey have signed cooperation agreement in combating trafficking in human beings with 5 countries and cooperation agreements in the security field with more than 100 countries. In this context, cooperation agreements were signed with the following BSEC Member States: Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine.
56. Turkey's legislation in the field of human trafficking comprises relevant laws and regulations: Penal Code of Turkey (Art. 80), Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Art. 48-49, Art. 55), International Labor Law (Art. 16), Act of Fees (Art. 88) and Citizenship Law (Art. 16), Implementing Regulation of the Law on Work Permit of Foreigners (Art. 7), Road Transport Regulations (Art. 4), Implementing Regulation of Turkish Citizenship Law (Art. 72). At the same time, the "Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims" was enforced with the aim to determine the procedures and principles regarding the prevention of human

trafficking, the fight against human trafficking, the protection of the victims of human trafficking without any differentiation between Turkish and foreign citizens, granting of residence permits to foreign victims and rendering support to the victims.

57. The first steps taken in Turkey in the fight against human trafficking, began with the First National Action Plan, covering the period from 2003-2005. Subsequently, the Second National Action Plan was adopted in 2009 and is being implemented. Preparatory work for the Third National Action Plan is currently underway. Activities will be determined according to the Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Cooperation areas of the Third National Action Plan. In this context, a working procedure has been adopted in which all relevant public institutions, non-governmental organizations and academicians are included in the process.
58. Regarding the funding of the fight against human trafficking and victim protection, as well as public expenditures on trafficking prevention programmes, the activities in the field of combating human trafficking are mainly covered from the budget of the Department of Protecting of Human Trafficking Victims of the General Directorate on Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and also from the projects financed by the International Migration Organization, the International Center for Migration Policy Development and other relevant non-governmental organizations. The fight against human trafficking in Turkey is carried out through the coordination of the following institutions: the Directorate General of Migration Management, the Gendarmerie General Command, the General Directorate of Security, the Coast Guard Command, the Land Force Command, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Disaster and Emergency Management Authority and the Red Crescent.
59. Trafficking in human beings remains a topical issue in **Ukraine**. National legislation in the field of preventing and combating human trafficking includes: the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ratified in 2010); Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (ratified in 2004); the optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (ratified in 2003); Law of Ukraine "On Countering Human Trafficking" dated 20 September 2011 No. 3739-VI (as amended); Law of Ukraine "On Social Services" dated 17 January 2019 No. 2671-VIII (as amended); Decree of the President of Ukraine "On the National Counter-Trafficking Coordinator" dated 5 August 2020 No. 306/2020; Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the Procedure for Establishing the Status of a Victim of Trafficking in Human Beings" dated 23 May 2012 No. 417 (as amended); Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Adoption of the Procedure for Interaction of Actors Involved in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings" dated 22 August 2012 No. 783 (as amended); Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Adoption of the Procedure to Pay One-Time Financial Aid to Victims of Trafficking" dated 25 July 2012 No. 660 (as amended); Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the State Social Program to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the Period up to 2020" dated 24 February 2016 No. 111 (as amended); Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Ensuring Social Protection of Children in Difficult Life Circumstances" dated 1 June 2020 No. 585; Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "Some Issues of Processing Applications about/from the Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Family Violence, Gender-Based Violence, Violence against Children or a Threat Thereof" dated 16 December 2020 No. 1369; Resolution

of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On Consultative and Advisory Bodies on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development, Prevention and Counteraction to Domestic Violence, and Combating Human Trafficking” dated 5 September 2007 No. 1087 (as amended).

60. The Ukrainian government has actively developed the state policy in the field of combating trafficking in human beings. By the Decree of the President of Ukraine, dated 05.08.2020, No. 306/2020, the Ministry of Social Policy was appointed as the national coordinator in the field of combating trafficking in persons, with the task to coordinate the activities of other ministries and departments. In this field, at present, one of the priorities of the Ministry of Social Policy is preparation of amendments to the legal and regulatory instruments, in particular on decentralization reform, as well as the creation of the National Social Service Office.
61. The main directions of state policy on combating trafficking in human beings are enshrined in the Law of Ukraine “On Combating Human Trafficking”. The Government of Ukraine is carrying out adequate work to strengthen state control in the field of combating human trafficking. The State Social Program to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the period till to 2020, provides for an Action Plan to prevent human trafficking and envisages funding of measures and activities defined by the Program. According to the Program, the planned funding from the state budget was 24 148.8 thousand UAH (approx. 717 425 EUR), in 2020. The expenditures from local budgets in 2020, equalled 219.22 thousand UAH (approx. 6508 EUR), in 2020. Expenditures from other sources were 7,126.0 thousand UAH (approx. 211 765 EUR), in 2020. It should also be noted that the state budget of Ukraine for 2020, envisaged funds in amount of 1,876.9 thousand UAH (approx. 55 750 EUR), as a payment of one-off payment for persons with the status of a human trafficking victim. The Present Draft of the State Social Program to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2021-2025, has been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for consideration.

IV THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES IN COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

62. One of the key components of the successful combat against the trafficking in human beings is the parliamentary oversight. Adequate political backing, on behalf of national and international parliamentary institutions, is crucial for the joint and effective action, to mitigate the adverse consequences of the trafficking in human beings, in the BSEC Member States.
63. The Parliaments of the BSEC Member States have an essential role to play in the fight against human trafficking, by improving anti-trafficking legislation. A profound understanding of the concept of human trafficking is needed, in order to develop an effective national legislation to address this multi-faced threat, as well as a proper definition of trafficking in persons, in national legislation. The parliaments are to ensure that domestic laws tackling human trafficking are harmonized with the international legal framework addressing the issue.
64. National human trafficking legislative framework must be comprehensive and is to cover all dimensions of trafficking to successfully address the phenomenon. Therefore, laws on crime, migration, labour, health, child protection and other related laws must have the provisions regarding the various aspects of trafficking.

65. The Parliaments should promote a study on the market for the trafficked people and the mechanisms regarding the demand-traffickers-trafficked, in order to detect problem areas and take appropriate measures, as well as to develop preventive policies within this scope. In addition, the Parliaments are to elaborate strategies for combating human trafficking across and within national borders.
66. Parliaments play an important role in raising awareness about human trafficking and the vulnerabilities and risks linked to it. They actively participate in the information and communication campaigns on the prevention and combating human trafficking, with various anti-trafficking stakeholders.
67. The specialized parliamentary committees play an active role in the fight against human trafficking, by conducting research and investigation where necessary, especially in the regions where there is a danger for human trafficking.
68. The Parliaments are also to cooperate with economic sectors to effectively combat trafficking in supply chains and to raise awareness about potential threats of labour exploitation in the business sector.

V CONCLUSIONS

69. As indicated in the Report, fighting such a complex phenomenon as trafficking in human beings requires coordinated efforts at local, national and international levels and must take into account the specific circumstances in each individual state. It is a complex threat, both locally and internationally, that requires a multi-disciplinary approach and regional and international cooperation in the countries of origin, transit and destination.
70. Trafficking in human beings continues to be a serious threat for the economies in the BSEC Region. Human trafficking damages the structure of local economies, adds law enforcement burden to all levels of government and destroys people's lives. It leads to increased crime and decreased welfare of nations. As trafficking patterns and methods constantly adapt to changing legislative environment and law enforcement efforts, the counter-trafficking response asks a similar adjustment. Targeted capacity-building initiatives for key actors, in the fight against trafficking, enhance policymaking and strengthen the effectiveness of adequate law-enforcement efforts.
71. While it is obvious that the government institutions and agencies, especially law enforcement and social services of the BSEC Member States play the main role in the fight against trafficking in human beings, the role of the private sector cannot be ignored. Combating human trafficking can only be effectively addressed with collaborative efforts between state institutions and the private sector. Without the involvement of the business communities of the Region, it is very hard to prevent human trafficking in the workplace and supply chains. A responsible approach of the business community in respecting human and labour rights complements the efforts of the Governments of the BSEC Member States. Thus, it is important that the BSEC Member States work closely with the private sector, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and involve businesses to report on measures to reduce human trafficking and forced labour in their supply chains.
72. The path towards preventing and combating human trafficking lies in promoting transparency in supply chains and the responsible and fair recruitment of workers, as well as in the government measures to promote transparency and accountability in public procurement processes. It is important that the BSEC Member Countries

strengthen and enforce broader regulations to prevent trafficking, as well as regulations for labour migration.

73. It is important that the governments of the BSEC Member States adopt a range of measures aiming at discouraging demand for services of trafficked persons, as well as take steps to fight the shadow economy, formalize labour relations, to better protect workers' rights, in accordance with the principles and norms of the International Labour Organization.
74. The grave impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and asymmetric recovery from the global economic crisis are likely to increase trafficking in human beings. It can be alleviated in the recovery phase, by investments in job creation and economic recovery. The BSEC Member States take measures to strengthen their anti-trafficking efforts and to ensure access to healthcare, unemployment services and other welfare services, to those in need of this support. The consequences in terms of increased crime, vulnerability, exploitation and trafficking could be ameliorated by providing safe legal migration for refugees and migrants, and immigration status in destination countries.
75. It is necessary that state agencies, law enforcement bodies and civil society coordinate their efforts to combat all forms of trafficking in human beings. It is also recommended that bilateral agreements between the BSEC countries are strengthened and coordinated policies are developed, both at national and international levels, to combat the activities of human traffickers. In addition, it is suggested that the BSEC Member States support implementation of legislative and other measures, to prevent and combat human trafficking and to protect the rights of victims of trafficking, by dedicating necessary human and financial resources.
76. The PABSEC is of the opinion that the effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons needs a comprehensive international and regional approach, cooperation, the exchange of information, experiences and other practical measures, including socio-economic measures, at national, regional and international levels.
77. The PABSEC encourages national parliaments in their efforts to adapt their policies and strategies to effectively struggle with all forms of human trafficking and stands ready to promote further coordination among the parliaments of the Member States, in fighting this multidimensional problem. Reducing the incidence of human trafficking must become a joint response goal and a top priority.