



## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Counsellor Lars Løberg to the 2012 Human Dimension implementation meeting, Warsaw 28 September 2012 – Working Session 8

#### **Thank you, Mr. Chairman,**

Human trafficking is one of the worst crimes that can be committed to a person, perhaps with the exception for the death penalty that two of our participating states still practice. That is why my government takes this security threat seriously, and that is why Norway has increased her efforts to track down traffickers and has taken important steps to protect the possible victims of human trafficking.

Norway has recently seen several successful prosecutions against traffickers. A strong and sustained cooperation between dedicated police investigators and all relevant levels of the prosecution service, from the very start of the investigation, is a common factor in these cases. In investigations against traffickers, evidence about the relationship between traffickers, victims and other involved persons, is vital. Decisions about which evidence to collect and how to build a case that can be expected to convince the courts, require a close cooperation and understanding between all law-enforcement actors. Awareness and clear support from the chief of police is necessary to ensure that resources are made available for what often can become expensive and time-consuming investigations. Investigations will regularly include using channels of communication with other states, often resulting in gathering evidence abroad.

Norway is a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. We support the valuable work of the independent expert group – GRETA – tasked with monitoring the way states fulfill their obligations, as described by Ms. Nestorova in her introduction. GRETA will publish a report on Norway early next year, following a country visit this spring. The visit was carried out in a communicative and supportive manner, allowing for discussions that were of great use to participants from various authorities in the meetings that were conducted. Judging from the many informative reports already published, GRETA has proved to be an effective tool in identifying obstacles and challenges facing the different countries. The monitoring done by GRETA will in the future be one of the main indicators for

how Norway is implementing our international obligations in fighting trafficking, including the OSCE Action Plan.

When it comes to the question about how we ensure that victims of trafficking have access to legal counseling and representation, let me describe to you the Norwegian model: Possible victims of trafficking have the right to at least 3 hours free legal counsel. Assistance providers are trained to establish contact between the victim and a lawyer at an early point. If the victim reports the case to the police, and an investigation is opened, the victim will have the right to be assisted through the judicial process by a supportive lawyer, who will prepare any relevant compensation claims, with the help of a translator if needed. Lawyers should only accept such appointments if they are familiar with trafficking cases, owing to the vulnerable position of the victim, who needs to be provided with information in a manner that allows for the victim to fully understand his or her situation. Norway has evaluated the way our 6-month reflection period functions, and one of the key findings was that victims did not manage to fully understand the information provided by various authorities and individuals. Thus, there is room for improvements, and we are working on that.

We deem the work of ODIHR and Special Representative Ms Giammarinaro in this field to be of great value. We support the continued priority of the OSCE efforts to combat Human trafficking and we urge all participating States to stand united and to work together in implementing commitments and recommendations.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your attention.