



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating
Trafficking in Human Beings

24th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons

Beyond Awareness-Raising: Reshaping Human Trafficking Prevention

15-16 April 2024

Hofburg, Vienna, Austria

CONCEPT NOTE

THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference is a high-level annual gathering of key stakeholders from across the OSCE region that aims to raise the political profile of the fight against trafficking in human beings (THB) and discuss emerging topics and trends in this area. With participation from national authorities, as well as international and civil society organizations, the Alliance helps to align and amplify the efforts of all stakeholders toward the common goal of preventing and combating human trafficking. Since its establishment in 2004 as a framework for advocacy and co-operation, the Alliance has supported OSCE participating States in developing a robust, harmonized approach to combating THB that seeks to protect human rights, security, the rule of law, and good governance throughout the region.

THE FOCUS

The 24th Alliance Conference against Trafficking in Persons will offer **analysis of current prevention efforts and a vision to reshape approaches to prevention**, by assessing various vulnerabilities, challenges of emerging and new forms of trafficking, identifying gaps in prevention measures, and showcasing promising tools and practices developed across the OSCE for more effective prevention of THB. This critical review is pivotal as prevention efforts often center on campaigns to raise public awareness led by various actors including civil society, governments, and international organizations. Despite the resources spent on crafting and disseminating campaign messages to the population at large or to specific audiences, evidential data on the efficacy of these efforts is limited. Hence, this year's Alliance Conference calls on participating States to go beyond those campaigns, exploring wider and innovative methods of prevention and reshaping traditional approaches to prevention to include targeted approaches for specific vulnerable groups or circumstances that traffickers exploit. The Conference will promote a “whole-of-society” approach to prevention that is embedded in inclusive and innovative partnerships between governments, civil society actors, private sector, and communities to address increasing vulnerabilities and deter perpetrators.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

As human trafficking continues to thrive and exceed the resources allocated to combating it, anti-trafficking actors need to reflect on how to make their actions more impactful and cost-effective. Anti-trafficking prevention efforts remain prominent in national strategies and account for a large proportion of the investment in anti-trafficking agendas. To date, however, there has been limited analysis and research assessing the effectiveness and impact of these efforts.

This is also evident in the findings of the survey¹ conducted by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) in

¹[Survey Report 2021 of Efforts to Implement OSCE Commitments and Recommended Actions to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings | OSCE](#)

2021. The survey revealed that participating States appear highly active in implementing awareness and educational campaigns. However, despite the high levels of awareness-raising activities, countries have limited data on the actual existing levels of awareness about THB among the general population.² Similarly, the report highlights that such awareness-raising interventions are often implemented in the absence of systematic research and assessments of whether the campaigns themselves are successful in raising awareness and leading to action that helps prevent trafficking. Information regarding the effectiveness and impact of prevention activities, and to what extent such activities have improved the capacity of anti-trafficking stakeholders to identify, prevent, and respond to THB, remain nascent.

Commitments of participating States to prevent human trafficking are underpinned in numerous OSCE Ministerial Declarations³, and Ministerial and Permanent Council Decisions⁴ and outline a broad scope of actions that range from data collection and research, enhancing economic and social policies and measures aimed at addressing root causes of THB to education, awareness-raising, and legislative measures. The 2003 OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and its Addenda provide OSCE participating States with a strategic long-term vision in the prevention of human trafficking, the protection of trafficked persons, and the prosecution of offenders. Of relevance to this year's Alliance Conference, the OSCE Action Plan recommended participating States improve their efforts in several key areas such as [..implementing measures to reduce the invisibility of exploitation; A multi-agency programme of monitoring, administrative controls and intelligence gathering on the labour markets, and, where applicable, on the sex industry; promoting targeted awareness-raising and public education in order to ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons vulnerable to THB; and conducting research into and analysis of subjects such as the character and scale of THB and the trafficking and exploitation mechanisms deployed by the organized criminal groups, in order to develop effective and well-targeted prevention measures on trafficking in human beings..].

OSCE participating States recognized that the prevention of trafficking in human beings is a priority and reaffirmed their [...commitment to addressing factors that make persons more vulnerable to trafficking and emphasizing the importance of a cross-dimensional and comprehensive approach to combating trafficking in human beings, which requires a focus on carrying out effective prevention measures].⁵

Researching and understanding the vulnerabilities that perpetrators exploit for various forms of trafficking has therefore consistently been the focus of the OSCE's OSR/CTHB⁶. While it is widely acknowledged that the most vulnerable populations include women, children, persons belonging to minority groups, people on the move, and persons with disabilities, the specific needs of these groups are often overlooked within anti-trafficking initiatives. This is an issue that is exacerbated by emerging trafficking trends such as trafficking for the purpose of exploitation in

² For example, only 37% of the respondents reported having information on whether their population knows how to protect themselves from THB, and 48% on whether their population knows how to identify and report cases of THB.

³ Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings adopted in Porto 2002

⁴ Vienna Ministerial Council Decision No.1/2000 (MC(8).DEC/1)

⁵ Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/17 (MC.DEC/6/17)

⁶ [Applying Gender-Sensitive Approaches in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings | OSCE](#); [Child Trafficking and Child Protection: Ensuring that Child Protection Mechanisms Protect the Rights and Meet the Needs of Child Victims of Human Trafficking | OSCE](#);

criminal activities⁷ whereby traffickers increasingly target and abuse the position of vulnerability, be it inherent or circumstantial.

Emerging THB patterns and the intersectionality of vulnerabilities underscore the urgent need for multifaceted anti-trafficking strategies, including a nuanced and strategic approach to proactive prevention programmes that go beyond awareness campaigns. By recognizing and understanding these evolving dynamics and the unique risks faced by individuals in situations of vulnerability and by implementing prevention efforts informed with data and research, we can better prevent human trafficking by more effective risk mitigation and empowerment of vulnerable populations.

THE OBJECTIVES

The Alliance Conference aims to catalyze action for a paradigm shift in the approach to human trafficking prevention by exploring innovative strategies that go beyond traditional awareness-raising interventions. By delving into situations of vulnerabilities and root causes of exploitation, as well as emerging trafficking trends, experts will present lessons learned and promising practices in the field of THB prevention and propose ways to make such efforts more strategic and targeted. The conference aims to encourage participants to reflect upon the scope of prevention efforts and to what extent they address situations of vulnerabilities, as well as diverse forms of trafficking, including those forms that are often overlooked (panel 1). The Conference will also provide a platform for a candid assessment of what is working and what is not in prevention efforts (panel 2). Lastly, the Conference will encourage an exchange of information on effective tools to reshape prevention for the future (panel 3). The special panel will share insights into challenges linked to identifying vulnerabilities that are obscured in criminal activities and the consequences of a lack of targeted prevention efforts and accurate assessments of those vulnerabilities.

THE AUDIENCE AND FORMAT

The Conferences of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons are attended by representatives of the 57 OSCE participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation, major international organizations and NGOs that are partners in the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, as well as civil society, experts with lived experience, media, the private sector, academia, and relevant professional networks of national anti-trafficking practitioners. The 24th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons will be conducted in Vienna and bring the OSCE anti-trafficking community together in person. Active participation during the discussion sessions and via Twitter - @osce_cthb, #CTHB24 – is highly encouraged. For those who cannot travel to Vienna, a Zoom link to follow the discussions will be provided. Ahead of the Alliance, participants can use the hashtag #askOSCE on Twitter to ask questions to the speakers. More information will soon be available at <https://www.osce.org/event/alliance24>

⁷ According to the 2021 Survey Report, cases most commonly reported as under investigation and/or in the judicial process are those for forced begging and forced criminality. Cases of THB for forced criminality rose from 47% in 2016 to 63% in 2021 while cases of THB for forced begging rose from 47% in 2016 to 59% in 2021. A similar trend has also been reported by the 2022 UNODC report (https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP_2022_web.pdf) which highlighted Trafficking for “other purposes rose from 7% to 22% in the years 2016 – 2020.”