

## **Recommendations following the visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 22 - 25 March and 11 -14 July 2021**

Between 22 and 25 March 2021, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Valiant Richey and the OSCE PA Vice-President Margareta Cederfelt<sup>1</sup> conducted a series of online meetings with key anti-trafficking interlocutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meetings aimed to explore the situation of asylum seekers and migrants transiting through the country and discuss how to address the challenges related to trafficking in human beings in these mixed-migration flows.

The meetings were organized in close co-ordination with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and included conversations with the State Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the Parliamentary Joint Committee for Human Rights, the Chief Prosecutor, as well as representatives of International Organizations and local NGOs.

On 11 - 14 July 2021, Special Representative Valiant Richey and Dr. Gudrun Kugler, Vice-Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, undertook a field visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina to assess the situation on the ground, with a particular focus on the anti-trafficking response in the migrant temporary reception facilities.

As a result of the above visits, the following concluding observations and recommendations have been developed for the attention of relevant stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. The need to **identify and assist** victims of trafficking among migrants and asylum seekers, irrespective of the country of exploitation or country of destination, should be regarded as a priority for the anti-trafficking action in all locations that have temporary reception centres.
2. The above need should be reflected in **local action plans** for combating trafficking in human beings, and supported by the adequate allocation of **human and financial resources**.
3. **Screening of new arrivals** should not solely focus on their eligibility to enter the asylum system. Applying for **asylum** and seeking **assistance as a victim of trafficking** are **not self-exclusive procedures**; whenever relevant, they can and should be administered in parallel.

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<sup>1</sup> Margareta Cederfelt was elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly at the 2021 Remote Session.

4. **Screening interviews** should be conducted at the temporary reception centres with the aim of identifying potential victims of trafficking. The screening interviews should be conducted in a **multi-agency setting** and include social workers/NGO personnel experienced in working with trafficking victims.
5. To increase the capacity of first line responders to screen and address vulnerabilities of the migrant population, consideration should be given to **spreading temporary reception centres** across the transit journey, thus ensuring a more manageable workload and upholding victims' rights.
6. Newly established **local co-ordination teams** should **work closely with the temporary reception centres** both in the area of identification and assistance, and in training and awareness raising. For this, their capacity to initially identify and refer presumed foreign victims of trafficking in human beings should be strengthened.
7. Standard Operating Procedures for the temporary reception centers should contain a component on dealing with vulnerable migrants including victims of trafficking which will cover identification, referral and assistance of potential victims of trafficking. The SOPs should also include co-operation with the local anti-trafficking co-ordination teams.
8. **Information on assistance** to victims of trafficking should be available in the languages understood by the migrants. This information should also be **proactively delivered** through briefings and other awareness raising events at the temporary reception centres.
9. Specialized, safe, gender-specific **accommodation** should be available for presumed victims of trafficking identified at the temporary reception centres.
10. Obligatory appointment of legal guardians for **unaccompanied minors should be implemented**. Legal guardians should be trained, appointed without delay and have a caseload that would enable them to perform their duties in the best interests of the child. Unaccompanied minors should be accommodated separately from other groups.
11. All children in mixed-migration flows should be granted unconditional **access to education** across the country.
12. **The promising practice of the Strike Force** for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration as an operational body that ensures co-operation and co-ordination between the law enforcement authorities across the country should be maintained and further enhanced.

The OSR/CTHB and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina are ready to provide further support to local authorities with regard to both policy improvement and capacity building, toward building a stronger and more sustainable identification and protection framework.