

## Joint Statement by the Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of South-East Europe

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On the occasion of the 16<sup>th</sup> EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October 2022, WE, the Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of South-East Europe (SEE), members of the Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of SEE (NATC SEE):

NOTING that the number of people who have fled the war in Ukraine has passed 7.5 million while more than seven million are displaced internally within Ukraine;

RECALLING the concerns raised by the Anti-Trafficking Coordinators at the meeting of NATC SEE on 2 June 2022 when discussing the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on human trafficking in the NATC SEE members and mitigating the trafficking risks amidst the mass displacement from Ukraine in the neighbouring countries – namely, that an increased vulnerability to trafficking was expected to advance in the upcoming period due to lack of access to the labour market in the hosting countries.

WELCOMING the adoption of the *Common Anti-Trafficking Plan to address the risks of trafficking in human beings and support potential victims among those fleeing the war in Ukraine* under the lead of the EU Anti-trafficking Coordinator;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the *Recommendations of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (SR/CTHB) on the need to enhance anti-trafficking prevention amid mass migration flows*, as well as the *Guidance Note on addressing the risks of trafficking in human beings related to the war in Ukraine and the ensuing humanitarian crisis* by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA);

RECOGNISING the initiatives of the Protection Cluster in Ukraine establishing an Anti-Trafficking Task Force, Interagency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), establishing an ICAT Policy Support Group on trafficking in persons in the context of the Ukraine crisis, as well as the efforts undertaken by EUROPOL and EUROJUST to enhance the response to cases of human trafficking in relation to the war in Ukraine, and the engagement of the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict;

BUILDING on the vast knowledge base that has formed over the past two decades regarding what constitutes a successful anti-trafficking response, specifically informed by the lessons learned from previous conflicts and guided by the information of the incidence of human trafficking in the context of this ongoing war in Ukraine;

1. REITERATE the strategic priorities for 2020-2024 set forth in the Strategy Paper of the Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators of SEE, adopted on 4 March 2020, particularly that of on protection - maintaining the focus on the continued mixed migration flows through the Network's members and continuing advancing the skills of frontline responders to enable a holistic and human rights-based response from the perspective of combating human trafficking.
2. UNDERLINE the importance of survivor-inclusive and survivor-informed approach, as well that of gender- and child-sensitive approach, supporting vulnerable individuals and groups, and establishing tools and mechanisms to ensure safe online-environment for children;

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3. ENCOURAGE the authorities to work with the relevant communities to increase public awareness about the modalities used by the perpetrators and to ensure the community does not unknowingly contribute to the vulnerabilities to human trafficking; to assess, which communities are particularly at risk, also to work with the community-based and civil society organisations to understand the underlying cultural contexts and practices, and to ensure that all the services required for successful reintegration of trafficked persons are available;
4. INVITE the governments of the countries faced with the influx of people that fled the war, to consider the following minimum set of recommendations as the essential minimum to avoid that human trafficking will become a crisis within a crisis:
  - Keeping track of the developments in the human trafficking field placing particular attention on monitoring the situation concerning people fleeing from Ukraine.
  - Ensure continuous dissemination of information about potential safety risks, exploitation and human trafficking among the authorities responsible for the first contact - the personnel of the reception centres, border and local police structures, officers, NGOs, volunteer's networks and among the arriving persons. Make information available (including in Ukrainian and Russian) about registration, helplines and support services available to refugees.
  - Prepare the national anti-trafficking mechanisms - National Referral Mechanisms or equivalent systems - for identification of trafficking cases among displaced population, among others, by providing training and capacity development to key first line responders to enable them to identify possible human trafficking cases and support the presumed trafficked persons.
  - Support the organisations that provide for the immediate and long-term needs of trafficked people. *Ensure access to the labour market and to language and vocational courses that could be attended in parallel with the employment.*
  - *Coordinate with the Ukrainian diaspora in the receiving country in order to obtain access to vulnerable groups. Monitor situations and signals for potential exploitation and abuse.*
  - Actively identify violations of workers' rights. The perpetrators should be held responsible by law enforcement agencies, requiring the development and use of indicators, and training programmes for labour inspectors and law enforcement agencies on trafficking for labour exploitation.
  - Register unaccompanied and separated children. Provide age-appropriate protection and support services. Cooperate with other countries to identify, trace and reunite unaccompanied, separated or missing children with their family members.
  - Facilitate the children's access to regular schooling and other child protection measures in order to grant them their basic right to education and render them less likely to become involved in child labour or begging.
5. UNDERTAKE TO publicise and disseminate the public action messages developed under the initiative of the Government of Slovenia by the Secretariat of the NATC SEE to address the vulnerability to human trafficking among the people fleeing the war in Ukraine.
6. THANK the Republic of Slovenia for maintaining the momentum of NATC SEE, and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development for its support as the Secretariat of the NATC SEE.