



**Statement by Temporary Officer, Eva Dröfn Hassell Guðmundsdóttir.
1394th Permanent Council, 14 October 2022. Iceland in response to the
report by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for
Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings.**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

While we align with the statement of the European Union, allow me to add the following remarks on behalf of the Icelandic delegation.

My delegation would like to thank the Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Mr Valiant Richey, for his report to the Permanent Council and at the same time express our sincere gratitude for the country visit paid to Iceland this week and your expertise shared with our national actors working to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings. The visit paid by you and your capable team, the valuable meetings, and insightful workshops, help us in our efforts.

Honest and open discussion about the realities and prevalence of human trafficking in Iceland undoubtedly raised awareness and promoted ambitions on how we can do better. Authorities gained important knowledge about how we can proceed to strengthen our response, coordinate better among different actors, and achieve better results.

Iceland, as other OSCE participating States, faces challenges in the fight against human trafficking. Your visit has left us with valuable tools to strengthen our response and you can rely on Iceland's continued support in your efforts.

We very much look forward to your report and recommendations.

Mr. Chair,

Millions of people globally are suffering because of the serious crime of human trafficking, and it is those most vulnerable who are most affected.

It is important for all OSCE participating States to use the toolbox and competencies of OSCE structures to improve the implementation of our OSCE commitments. Especially today when we are faced with the alarming developments caused by the Russian Federation's unlawful war against Ukraine.

In the report of our Special Representative Valiant Richey, it is highlighted that the millions of Ukrainian people who were forced to flee their homes are especially vulnerable to falling victim to trafficking, as well as the frightening increase in online searches and demand for Ukrainian women and girls following the humanitarian and refugee crisis caused by Russia's illegal and brutal war of aggression.

We would like to reiterate our support and gratitude for the quick and appropriate response by Special Representative Valiant Richey and his office to the unfolding situation in Ukraine, both with regards to projects and policy recommendations.

While we reaffirm our commitment to enhance our efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings in all its forms, and protect survivors, we cannot but state very clearly that as long as Russia continues its unlawful war against Ukraine, the increased risk of trafficking continues.

To conclude, we wish you, Special Representative Valiant Richey, and your team, continued success with your work and affirm our continued cooperation.

I thank you.