

H.E. MR. IVICA ĐAČIĆ

A) FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

For the past 10 years the Republic of Serbia has been putting significant efforts into fight against human trafficking and protecting human trafficking victims. From the very beginning, these activities have been carried out in partnership with the office of the International Organization for Migration in Belgrade.

Implementation of the comprehensive response policy to human trafficking and creation of the National Mechanism for Coordination of these activities is a direct implementation of the Strategy against Human Trafficking from 2006 and our international-legal obligations that we took over by signing of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its additional Protocols, adopted in Palermo in 2000.

In the field of fight against human trafficking Republic of Serbia is recognized as a country of good practice and cooperation among its authorities, civil associations and international organizations, in four fields, known as 4 "Ps" , Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership.

In the spirit of comprehensive partnership, and also aiming implementation of the National Action Plan, Joint Program for Fight against Human Trafficking has been implemented in Serbia since June 2010, handled by representatives of state authorities and international organizations.

Belgium, Switzerland and UN GIFT fund provided financial assistance for the Joint Program.

Joint Program for Fight against Human Trafficking is implemented by key partners such as the UN High Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) together with the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The most important activities of the Joint Program are the following:

- **Two comprehensive national studies** were finished, one dealing with issues of prevention and protection, and the other one dealing with the Criminal-legal response
- Creation of the first official **training program for judges, prosecutors and police officers,**

- **Creation of the first official training program for social workers,**
- **Two reports on implementation of strategic acts** adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia were made-Strategy of Fight against Human Trafficking and National Action Plan for Fight against Human Trafficking,
- **Feasibility Study on Service for Coordination of Human Trafficking Victims Protection** was made,
- We are currently working on **capacities strengthening for 6 social work centers,**
- **Founding of the first state Shelter for Emergency Housing for Human Trafficking Victims,**
- **Prevention Fund was established,**
- **Fund for Direct Help was established,**
- **Founding of the First Clinics for Fight against Human Trafficking at three Law Schools-in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Nis.**

Joint project for fight against human trafficking is of great significance to the Republic of Serbia, and I personally consider that its realization shall contribute to even more successful countering human trafficking in our country; experiences gained through preparation and realization of the project, as an example of good practice, shall serve to other states in the region, as well as to all other states facing the global problem of human trafficking.

I would like to underline that this is the only joint program in the world supported by the UN GIFT, which has so far been put into full implementation, and which has been taken as an example of good practice in overall evaluation of the global initiative.

Having in mind all areas in which we implement our activities, we consider prevention to be the best response to the problem of human trafficking, because we think that it is better to prevent human trafficking than facing all tragic consequences of this modern slavery.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia carries out poverty reduction programs, programs of employment increase and those of social inclusion of vulnerable population categories, which actually present general prevention of human trafficking.

Additionally, since 2007, every October 18 we celebrate the European Anti-Trafficking Day, and during the entire month various preventive activities are taken, numerous public forums and seminars are organized. During the past few years, over 250.000 young people gained basic information on human trafficking problem and how to avoid human trafficking risks.

However, what Serbia became particularly recognizable for in the field of prevention is the film "Sisters" which has been seen by 7 million people Serbia, so far.

We are glad that precisely IOM was eager enough to assign us initial grant from its IOM 1035 Facility for such activity.

After the meeting and demonstration of an idea of making TV serial on all forms of human trafficking, the "Modern Slavery", during the 98th Session of the Council two years ago, we however managed to provide assets and modify the scenario for a movie that got support from the European Union and Government of Serbia.

Thus the IOM Facility served as a generator for gathering required assets in order to put into effect this significant preventive activity.

Film "Sisters" was shown again on November 25 in the UN, when it opened campaign of "16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women". The film itself is more than just a cinema show- it became powerful prevention tool in countering human trafficking that helps the most jeopardized ones-women and children, to become familiar in a authentic and realistic way with the problem of human trafficking, whereby it is clearly visible where obscure and dubious business offers could take.

The "Sisters" started "Better safe than sorry" national campaign in Serbia, which supported the world prevention campaign of the United Nations in fight against human trafficking under the name "Blue heart".

Serbia is among the first countries in Europe that initiated this UN campaign due to which Minister of the Interior and the producer of the film got certificate from the UNODC.

"Sisters" opens many issues related with women trafficking. It is the first movie in the world describing the Stockholm syndrome that speaks about violence and exploitation of victims of human trafficking, implies to corruption problems, insufficient knowledge of the problem, possibility of abuse of legal traveling and visa liberalization, abuse of modern technologies and internet, relation between clients and victims, relation of jurisdiction and court procedure towards victims of human trafficking as well as many other issues.

Even though there are significant preventive activities, human traffickers still recruit victims in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, and police officers of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia, in the period between January and end of October 2011 acquired knowledge and gathered evidence pointing to reasonable doubt that 25 offences were committed which led to apprehension of 43 traffickers, and 66 victims of human trafficking were identified in those cases.

Regarding the Western Balkans region, large number of detected cases in the Republic of Serbia is a result of the proactive approach to these issues by the police as well as all trainings that have been realized in the past few years, by the police, but also by the prosecution and courts, which all led to better identification of human trafficking cases, not only aiming sexual exploitation but as well other respective forms, such as labor exploitation, forced begging, forced criminal offences etc.

In order to be as successful as possible, we must establish even stronger and more formal partnership at national level between state authorities, non governmental and international organizations, as well as partnerships at regional, European and international level.

B) FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Referring to fight against illegal migration, occurrence of the world financial crisis, newly arisen and extended international conflicts and military developments, particularly in some countries of the African-Asian complex, contributed to increase of migration flow of the population that reflected significantly on the European continent, as well.

Apart from causing a new wave of population flows, the aforementioned developments caused changes in regard of origin and structure of migrants.

Comparing to the previous period, when main population migration were related to flows within the European countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Albania) towards the European Union countries, for the past few years migration trends have changed and gained intercontinental character. A large economic gap between the countries of the Southern Hemisphere, including the Middle East countries, and developed European countries influenced migration even more.

Border erasing between the European Union countries also contributed to the newly occurred migration flows.

Researches taken so far by the Republic of Serbia, in regard of current trends of illegal migration, established that the largest number of illegal migrants of African-Asian origin transfer organized or individually into the territories of Iran, Iraq and Turkey, and thereafter using ships or speed boats to Greece, Samos Island, and than to a place named Patra, near Athens.

The consequences of the most recent trend in illegal migration have been present in Greece where, according to the current estimates, there are several million illegal migrants at the moment, who intend to go to EU countries, in particular Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium...

The Republic of Serbia is not a country of final destination, but a transit state whose territory, given the countries of origin of the detected illegal migrants, is one of the transit routes connecting current high-risk migration countries with EU countries, which are usually the countries of final destination.

Also, the visa abolition between Serbia and Turkey has affected the course of illegal migration and the number of citizens of Turkey, as well as Tunisia, who are abusing the visa-free regime thus entering legally the territory of Serbia and illegally crossing to the territory of the EU, primarily Hungary.

Regarding illegal migration of the citizens from African and Asian countries, what is typical is the abuse of the right to asylum with the problem of establishing true identity and citizenship of such persons.

As a result of the implemented measures aimed at suppressing illegal migration and human smuggling, in the first ten months of 2011 there were 127 criminal charges filed against 252 persons for reasonable doubt that they had smuggled 1032 illegal migrants, and in 2010 there were 106 criminal charges filed against 211 perpetrators who smuggled 392 persons.

According to the criminal charges for illegal crossing the state border and human smuggling under Article 350 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia that were filed in the first ten months of 2011, the smuggled persons were mainly citizens of Afghanistan (321), Pakistan (198), Serbia (106), etc.

In order to improve effectiveness and coordination in suppression of illegal migration in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, the Government-level Council for Countering Illegal Migration has been established, the Strategy for Countering Illegal Migration adopted, the Action Plan drawn up covering in detail the implementation of the Strategy; also, the Coordinator for Countering Illegal Migration has been appointed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

In addition to the activities done and efforts made by the Republic of Serbia in the field of suppression of illegal migration and human trafficking, what is needed is better cooperation, assistance and support by EU Member States in the implementation of further joint activities in the fight against illegal migration.

What is needed, inter alia, is the support and assistance by other EU Member States in setting up the mechanism for return of detected third-country illegal migrants to their countries of origin and provision of funds for making the mechanism operational, setting up joint investigation teams and conducting joint investigations in the region and beyond, organising and implementing joint police operations at critical borders focusing on the suppression of illegal migration and human smuggling.

Also, for the purpose of better quality and more effective countering this form of threat for society, it is necessary to provide assistance for the training of police services in the region that are responsible for investigating human smuggling, but also for the training of border police officers who secure the state border and perform border checks.

We believe that creating conditions for a prompt and direct exchange of information (e.g. through opening joint offices of the police services of neighbouring countries) would contribute to better quality and more effective countering illegal migration.

Further involvement and engagement of international organisations and agencies operating in the area of illegal migration in the activities related to the suppression of illegal migration (FRONTEX, EUROPOL, EUROJUST, IOM, UNODC, ICMPD, etc), particularly in the territory of Greece, would also contribute to efficient countering the issue of illegal migration.

Thank you for your attention!