

OSCE promotes social services for victims of human trafficking in Kazakhstan

SHYMKENT, Kazakhstan, 26 June 2015 – The OSCE Programme Office in Astana took part in the presentation of the Special Report on Current Challenges in the Protection of Human Rights in Countering Human Trafficking in Kazakhstan and supported a roundtable discussion on special social services for victims of cruel treatment that took place today in Shymkent, South Kazakhstan Region.

The Special Report was developed by the Commission on Human Rights under the President in co-operation with international and non-governmental organizations. It covers some of the OSCE activities in this area and incorporates recommendations produced by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the country report based on the findings of the visits to Kazakhstan in 2013 and 2014.

Some 150 central and regional governmental officials, members of the Commission for Human Rights, academics, civil society activists and human rights defenders, representatives of the International Organization for Migration and non-governmental organizations from across the country involved in helping victims of trafficking in persons participated in the discussion of the Special Report. They supported its conclusions and recommendations, most notably aimed at establishing a National Referral Mechanism for victims of human trafficking and providing them with special social services.

“Both the government and civil society should work together to improve coordination in helping victims of human trafficking. The relevant state institutions should better support the initiatives of international organizations and NGOs at the regional level,” said Saparbek Tuyakbayev, Deputy Akim of the Southern Kazakhstan Region noting that the role of civil society in raising awareness about the rights of human trafficking victims should be enhanced.

“Trafficking in human beings is a gross violation of human rights but, first and foremost, it is one of the gravest transnational organized crimes. A consistent, coherent and coordinated approach is needed both at the national and international levels to effectively combat it,” noted Ambassador Natalia Zarudna, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Astana. She went on to add that only by strengthening the co-operation of all stakeholders involved could real progress be achieved in the difficult struggle against this evil.

The presentation was followed by a roundtable discussion on draft social services standards developed by an interdepartmental working group with the OSCE Programme Office’s support. Some 20 officials from the Internal Affairs and Health and Social Development Ministries and their departments in the Almaty, Dzhambul, Kyzylorda and Shymkent regions discussed with representatives of nongovernmental organizations a practical mechanism of the provision of social services for victims of cruel treatment.

The event is part of the Office’s multiyear efforts to raise awareness and build capacity of state institutions and civil sector in the field of anti-trafficking in accordance with the host country’s obligations under ratified international treaties.

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