



**Annex IV to BS/IM/R(2004)1**

**JOINT DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR / PUBLIC ORDER OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC) ON COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

*(Athens, 3 December 2004)*

We, the Ministers of Interior/ Public Order of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation: The Republic of Albania, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine; the Head of the Police of the Republic of Armenia met in Athens with the aim to set the basis for further cooperation and development of coordinated and effective activities for combating the crime of trafficking in human beings, in particular in its organized forms,

**Concerned** about the serious dimensions crime has taken in recent years, at a national and international level, especially the trafficking in human beings, organized crime and corruption, which constitutes a serious threat to our societies and an obstacle to the stability and economic development of the region,

**Emphasizing** the importance of coordinated actions and effective cooperation in the fight against crime through the enhancing of mutual understanding and mutual benefit,

**Considering** the increasing criminality of every form and the fact that our States, may be affected by this threat,

**Noting** that the very intensification of multilateral trade and transportation can bring about increased risks of trans-border and international crime of trafficking in human beings,

**Expressing** the wish for mutual cooperation to the greatest possible extent and effectiveness in this sector, with respect to human rights,

**Recognizing** that trafficking in human beings constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights and is a serious offence against dignity and integrity of human beings,

**Stressing** that trafficking in human beings, which is an extremely alarming phenomenon aiming at sexual and financial exploitation of persons, is often related to other forms of transnational organized crime such as narcotics and arms trafficking which produce huge profits that are often laundered and are consequently supplying the legal markets and

**Emphasizing** the importance of transnational cooperation for the maintenance of public order and security and the need to fight against trafficking in human beings, which endangers the security and prosperity of our States,

**Taking into account:**

-The Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its organized forms, done in Kerkyra on 2 October 1998 and its Additional Protocol done in Kiev on 15 March 2002,

- The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in New York, in 15 November 2000, aiming at the improvement of providing assistance and protection to victims,

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989,

-The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 4 November 1950 as well as its additional Protocols,

- The Statement of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States on the BSEC Contribution to Security and Stability adopted in Istanbul on 25 June 2004,

-The Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Council of Europe Member States, adopted at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee of Ministers, according to which the importance of enhanced action by the Council of Europe in the field of trafficking in human beings was underlined and

-The Joint Statements and Declarations of the Ministers of Interior/Public Order of the BSEC Member States signed at Yerevan, on 17 October 1996, at Istanbul, on 22 October 1997, at Poiana Brasov, on 28 April 2000 and at Kiev on 15 March 2002,

**Convinced that the achievement of our common aims and goals will be facilitated with the adoption of specific programs and measures,**

**Declare the following:**

a) The policy of the BSEC Member States on the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially in women and children, shall focus on strengthening the cooperation and coordination between the countries of origin, transit and destination. This policy should aim at:

- identifying and bringing the perpetrators before justice;

-assisting and protecting victims;

-raising public awareness on the dangers deriving from this form of criminality through information campaigns.

b) The relevant authorities of our States express their determination in:

- cooperating in the fight against the crime of trafficking in human beings and mainly against its organized forms, through the competent Police Authorities, in accordance with their national legislation and international obligations,
- taking specific measures for the establishment of a basis of cooperation with the aim of combating trans-border crime of trafficking in human beings,
- enhancing the international legal basis of cooperation of their law enforcement agencies, through further implementation of the treaties which have already been concluded at a multilateral or a bilateral level, on issues of police cooperation, or with the conclusion, where it is deemed necessary, of new treaties,
- holding meetings of experts of their competent agencies on a regular basis, organize joint training and skill enhancement seminars for the personnel involved mainly in operational services and to exchange experience, as well as legislative documents, with the aim of dealing jointly with every form of criminality,
- examining the adoption or reinforcement of their respective national coordination mechanisms against trafficking in human beings,
- forwarding the cooperation of the law enforcement agencies, for the prevention and suppression of this form of criminality,
- using the capabilities provided for by the establishment of the BSEC Network of Liaison Officers and further improve the information exchange mechanisms in accordance with the national and international law on personal data protection,
- examining how to organize a specialized and joint training for the personnel of the law enforcement agencies with a view to ensure that sufficient training will be provided to the personnel of the above-mentioned agencies.

c) The cooperation of the law enforcement agencies of the Member States shall also focus on exchanging best practices, which have been proved efficient in identifying the victims, in case of investigations and on the cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations in providing assistance and protection to the victims.

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