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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE Office supports the enhancement of the national referral mechanism to combat human trafficking in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE, 17 November 2009 - A roundtable discussion on the referral mechanisms for victims of human trafficking organized jointly by the OSCE Office in Dushanbe and the Tajik Inter-Agency Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings started in Dushanbe today.

Members of the Commission and representatives of key governmental and non-governmental organizations working with victims of trafficking took part in the meeting. The officials and participants in a study visit to Belgrade and Skopje made presentations and discussed the introduction of best co-operation practices between governmental structures and NGOs within the framework of national referral mechanisms for victims of human trafficking, and their possible application in Tajikistan.

The roundtable event will be followed by a three-day training session for members of the Commission to provide guidance in designing a more effective national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking.

"The aim of the training programme was to familiarize the participants with the functions of national referral mechanisms and international best practices applicable to Tajikistan, as well as to build the capacity of the National Rapporteur and the relevant Working Group to ensure proper implementation and monitoring of the national action plan," said Graziella Piga, the Gender and Anti-Trafficking Officer at the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. "To ensure respect for the human dignity of those who have suffered from human trafficking, a special focus will be on the concept of the victim, and international standards for the treatment of victims of trafficking, their assistance and protection."

Atham Abdulloev, Secretary of the Inter-Agency Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, said that both the study tour to Belgrade and Skopje and today's seminar were examples of successful co-operation. "Such events promote detailed examination of human trafficking challenges and help develop a more effective approach to combating this crime," he said.

The proposals of the roundtable discussion participants will be taken into account by the Commission in enhancing the national referral mechanism for human trafficking victims. A specific effort will be made to set up a national referral mechanism coordination office in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The Government of Tajikistan established a national framework to combat human trafficking after its 2002 ratification of the Palermo Protocols supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The protocols aim to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as to counteract the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air. The OSCE will continue supporting the authorities in this work. The roundtable discussion follows a related training session last week for police academy instructors and Interior Ministry staff.

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